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Spanish in the Elementary Schools

By J. Wesley Childers, New York State College for Teachers

This paper is a report on the work done by two of my colleagues at the New York State College for Teachers in establishing Spanish teaching programs at Westmere and at Loudonville, and also explains my work in teaching Spanish in the fourth and fifth grades in East Greenbush. This report will show how we started the three programs, how they are being continued, what success we have had, and what special problems we have encountered.

Nineteen hundred and fifty-three was our year of decision at Albany. The McGrath conference in Washington in January, followed by the Sixth University of Kentucky Conference in April, supplied the impetus for our State College FLES program. Following these conferences, two of my colleagues and I decided to see what we could do in our own local school areas. Our plan was to talk with local school board members and school officials, to interest local PTA members by speaking before their meetings on the merits of having foreign languages in the elementary grades, and to offer our services in teaching experimental classes.

The Guilderland Central School District had just opened a new elementary school in Westmere, near Albany. Dr. Edwin C. Munro belonged to the PTA of that district, and he spoke to members of that group and to school officials of his interest in starting a program in Spanish in the new school. The principal and the superintendent saw in the proposed program elements of value for the children, and Dr. Munro was invited in September, 1953, to start Spanish in the third, fourth, and sixth grades: one section in each of these grades, for twenty-minute sessions, twice per week.

From the very beginning, the Guilderland experiment was crowned with success. Every one involved was enthusiastic. A local newspaper, The Knickerbocker News, sent a reporter to the school to photograph a third grade in action, and the paper carried a long feature article about the way the children were learning. The principal of the school discovered that he had something good which he wanted to keep. At the end of the year, he decided to add a full-time Spanish teacher for the elementary grades. Therefore, in the fall of 1954 one of our college graduate students, a charming Puerto Rican woman, became a full-time Spanish teacher in the Guilderland School District, teaching in the third and fifth grades in three of the elementary schools. Her work has been so outstanding this year that another of our graduates has been added to the staff to do full-time work in French for 1955-56. The plan for the two languages will be for Spanish to continue into the fourth and sixth grades next year with the pupils who started in the

third and fifth this year, and for French to begin with the third and fifth grades.

The success story does not stop at this point, because two more of our graduates have been placed recently in the same school system: one for French and Spanish in the junior high, and another for the same languages in the senior high. The obvious conclusion from the Guilderland experiment is that the foreign language, if well taught, will "sell" itself to pupils and parents. If, however, the experimental program is to grow into a permanent language program for the grades, it must have the active support of the school board and of the school's administrative officials.

The second experimental program began in Loudonville, a residential suburb of Albany. Mr. Frank Carrino used his local PTA as a forum for his proposal for Spanish in the grades. He was invited by the school board to begin Spanish in two classes: one fourth grade and one fifth. Mr. Carrino began teaching in Loudonville in February, 1954. This language program was a success in respect to pupil-parent interest. At the end of the semester, the school board invited Mr. Carrino to continue the experiment through 1954-55, with the same children, now in the fifth and sixth grades. Although the Spanish program has continued to be well-taught and popular, it may not have a very bright future in Loudonville. At present, there seems to be little interest on the part of the school board at Loudonville to add a special language teacher for the public elementary school. However, there is an interest in encouraging local elementary teachers, through in-service training, to prepare themselves to keep the Spanish program going.

Our third experimental language program is the one with which I have been connected since February, 1954, at East Greenbush. This program started because one of the fourth-grade teachers in the Community School became aware that some of her brighter pupils needed additional interests to supplement their regular school program. This teacher talked to some of the parents about the idea of adding a foreign language. The parents liked the idea. Two of our State College faculty families had children in this teacher's room. One parent asked me to help start a language program for his child and others. I agreed to investigate the possibilities. A telephone call to the interested teacher and to the school superintendent cleared the way for an exploratory conference.

In the meantime, two other teachers at the same school decided that they would like to have foreign language instruction provided for their pupils. At our first planning

conference, these three teachers and I decided that we would offer Spanish to all the pupils in each grade; that I should come twice per week for twenty-minute periods; and that the regular teachers would be active participants, along with their pupils. Thus, our Spanish program was set up in two fourth grade sections and in one fifth grade, with about 85 pupils involved. The teachers gave the program a build-up in their classes, and on Tuesday, February 4, I stepped into a teaching situation that was almost ideal from the standpoints of motivation and interest. The initial semester was a success, and the ease with which the pupils learned amazed all of us. We had a public demonstration at State College on May 5, using one of the fourth grade sections, and on May 17 we had an open-house program for parents in each of the three classrooms. In order to give some idea of what was taught during the semester from February to the middle of May, I shall list our demonstration items:

1. The program opened with a roll call, each child answering "Presente," or "Servidor," or "Servidora" to his or her Spanish name.
2. We gave in Spanish the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, then sang two patriotic songs: the Spanish version of "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," and "America."
3. The pupils identified fruits by taking the correct ones from a fruit basket when they were told to do so in Spanish.
4. Parts of the body were identified by the use of the song, "Estas son las manos."
5. By the use of a clock, the children told time in Spanish.
6. Animals and their noises were identified by asking such questions as ¿Qué dice el Perrito? ¿Qué dice el gatito? ¿Qué dice el pollito?
7. Consecutive counting was demonstrated through a game in which we counted to see how long it would take a child to find an object which was hidden while he was out of the room.
8. We set the table, using Spanish names for all of the place settings.
9. We demonstrated the children's ability to understand something entirely new by telling them in Spanish the story of Little Riding Hood. By our use of pictures, gestures, and familiar words, the children followed the story with interest. Their pleasure was enormous.
10. We concluded with the songs "La cucaracha," and "Fray Felipe."

At the end of the school year, parents and school administrators voiced the hope that the program at East Greenbush could be continued in 1954-55. It has been continued this year, and it grew into a multi-language program in an unexpected manner. In November the principal sent a letter to all his elementary teachers in three different schools, asking for a meeting with those teachers who would be willing to introduce Spanish into their classrooms. Fourteen or fifteen teachers attended the meeting, and I explained the program to them. It soon developed that most of the teachers had studied French, one knew German, but only one knew Spanish. We immediately decided to set up language programs in French, German, and Spanish, using three members of our State College language staff and one high school teacher to do the teaching in those sections in which the home-room teacher felt that she needed help. Our experimental program in East Greenbush suddenly grew from three sections of Spanish with a total of 85 pupils, to fourteen sections and a total of 390 pupils: seven sections in French, 201 pupils; one in German, 32 pupils; six in Spanish, 157 pupils.

This year I am again teaching two fourth grade sections and one fifth grade section of Spanish at the Community School. The pupils in the fifth grade are those whom I had for a semester last year when they were fourth graders. This year I have tried to relate their work in the Spanish class to work which they are doing in science, mathematics, and social studies. For example, we learned to talk about the solar system in Spanish at the time they were studying about it in their regular class. When the pupils began to study birds and adopted a parakeet for their classroom pet, I devised a game which featured the parakeet and which also gave Spanish names for sixteen common birds of our area. In arithmetic, the pupils learned to add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers in Spanish. They also used Spanish in locating rivers, lakes, and states of the United States in connection with their study of geography.

Although the language program has been well received at East Greenbush, we do not expect the school board to add any specialized language teachers for the elementary grades. The school district is growing so fast in population that most of the tax money is used in erecting new buildings and in staffing them with regular elementary teachers. One new building was added last fall, and another will be added this coming September. When a new building is added, many pupils have to be shifted. Two-thirds of my original Spanish pupils with one semester's experience were shifted to a new school where most of them are now learning French. Next fall there will be another shift when the newest school is opened. The superintendent told me, "It is bad enough to try to place

the pupils according to where they live, without trying to place them according to the foreign language which they are learning." However, we hope to have some of the East Greenbush elementary teachers in our State College summer workshop, and we hope that some of them will feel able to continue the language in which they participated this year. Our State College staff has offered to prepare tape recordings for the use of these teachers.

Foreign languages in the grades has proved successful in these three school systems, but their very success reveals dangers on the local as well as on the State level. On the local scene, there is the danger that the unprepared teacher may harm, rather than help, the language program. There is also the danger of "professional" sabotage, when some of our colleagues, who have done nothing about starting a FLES program actively oppose a successful program if the language chosen is not of their specialty. Also, there is the danger that a few rather vocal persons may influence a school board to throw out an elementary language program. In the interest of economy, only the "practical" elementary subjects should be taught, these critics say.

But the greatest danger to the FLES program in New York State, in my opinion, seems to come from the Division of Elementary Education of our own State Education Department. The attitude of the staff members of this division toward foreign languages below the seventh grade seems to be one of skepticism, coolness, and even active opposition. The staff members expressed their attitudes in a "Letter to Supervisors" in January of this year. This published letter entitled "Should We Teach Foreign Language in the Elementary School?" was sent not only to supervisors but also to many superintendents throughout the State. One teacher told me recently that this letter had done much toward cooling the ardor of the superintendent toward the idea of introducing foreign languages in elementary schools of his district. Permit me to cite some lines from this letter, which, in my opinion, "stacks the cards" against foreign languages in elementary grades. The first quote indicates skepticism as to the language teacher's motive:

Interest in the teaching of foreign languages in the elementary school may be partly due to the encouragement of modern language teachers whose classes have not kept pace with the general upsurge in enrollments in other high school courses. Some of these people believe that if children begin the study of a foreign language early (and instruction is kept easy and interesting--"just a few phrases at a time on a conversational basis," as is the practice in European schools), more children will wish to continue foreign language study in high school....

It would be wise for every supervisor of elementary education to weigh carefully the pros and cons of this matter. Certainly we do not wish to add additional subjects to the already crowded curriculum of the elementary school unless these additional subjects are proved to be vital and necessary to a basic foundation program of education.

Elementary school people need to consider at what age a child should properly be taught a foreign language. The belief that young children can learn to speak a foreign language more easily than older children, if teaching is paced slowly, is not in itself a sufficient reason to teach the foreign language at an early age.... Some educators believe that since the mother tongue constitutes the instrument for thought which a child has to use all his life, this tool should be developed to a fairly high degree of efficiency before he is encouraged to start a second language. Many think that instruction in a foreign language should, therefore, not begin before the age of 12 years.

This State Education Department letter does not present adequately the aims and objectives which form the basic philosophy of those educators who do believe in teaching foreign languages to elementary school children. The letter states that there are very few research findings to guide the elementary schools in making a wise decision on this early study of foreign languages, but it refers to research which is wholly unfavorable.

Some of the research indicates that bilingualism in young children tends to retard the children in their learning of the mother tongue. Likewise, studies that deal with progress in learning show that somewhat older pupils learn the foreign language much more rapidly than do younger children. The Encyclopedia of Educational Research suggests that it seems logical to place beginning language study at a fairly advanced educational level.

The letter refers to our World War II experience with the ASTP programs as evidence that we do not need to begin foreign languages in the grades.

The inference from this experience does not seem to point to the need for beginning foreign language study in the elementary school. We need, rather, to improve our methods of language instruction rather than to begin earlier and continue instruction longer.

Those of us who are teaching foreign languages to elementary school pupils do not claim that our protégés can match the speed of ASTP trainees, or even that of high school and college students. We do know that young children are enthusiastic about foreign language instruction; they hear sounds accurately, and they imitate them without inhibition. We do know that we have many young friends who through our elementary language classes have become interested now in other human beings who live in foreign countries, in their ways of speaking, and in their manner of living. We also know that the children like to read books about these interesting foreign people.

In conclusion, I want to state that the joys of teaching in the FLES program far outweigh the disappointments. In addition, many of the tricks which we have learned to use in order to create life-like situations for children can be used successfully with college students as well. We have discovered that it is possible for old language dogs to learn new tricks. We have discovered once more that language teaching and learning is an exciting experience on all levels. The stimulus of being received with enthusiasm and affection by the elementary pupils--yes, of being adored because we are teaching an interesting subject--has brought us a renewed appreciation of our life's work. We now know that language is a miracle and that it is this miraculous gift which has made us human.

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José Martí's Views on the United States

By Roberta Day Corbitt, Asbury College

We of the United States have had at our disposal for more than half a century a candid interpretation of ourselves by a Latin American, but because it was not published in English we have failed to utilize it. The celebration in 1953 of the centenary of the birth of José Martí gave momentum to the study of his relationship to the United States, and called attention to his literary excellency.

The fourteen and a half years spent in the United States by Martí, the Cuban revolutionary leader, have borne fruit to our advantage and our disadvantage since the beginning of his journalistic career in this country in 1880. He came biased in favor of our political system, having, as he did, a passionate love of human liberty. His careful observation and reading, while he saw our system developing during the decade of the Eighties, with its territorial expansion, its increasing wealth, and its rapidly growing population, were productive of seventeen volumes of commentary on nearly every phase of our national life. Greatly impressed by the freedom granted to individuals to possess themselves and to enjoy the pursuit of happiness, he spoke of fifty million crowned heads, laborers who were kings, and the perfect political system. However, there was one pre-occupation that overshadowed his approval--that of the inordinate love of riches which he beheld on every hand. He analyzed it from various angles, and it was the conclusion of most of his discussions.

In Martí's opinion the origin of this covetousness lay in the European immigrants, but its outcome was the uncertain element. Repeatedly he either prophesied downfall for a nation so overwhelmingly greedy for wealth or asked the question, which he left unanswered, "What can be the destiny of a nation so mad for the possession of material gain?"

Martí had come to the United States with his mind filled with ideals and open to ideas, especially to all that had to do with democracy and the dignity of man. Having been educated in the field of Spanish law, he was well able to evaluate our laws, and he had his own worthy contribution to add to his observations as he wrote them for his fellow Latin Americans.

One of our greatest problems, as Martí saw it, was that of the influence of immigration. The accuracy of his judgment has been proved with the passing of three quarters of a century. He saw two factions pitted against each other in the molding of our national character: the Puritan

element of the Northeast which represented to him the foundation of our system of liberties and human rights, and the hungry underprivileged thousands who were fleeing from the hopelessness of their position in Europe and who seized with ruthless greed upon the opportunities and abundance of a new continent. Whether the mercenary newcomers would take the reins from the hands of the Puritan element could be discovered only with the passing of time.

With painstaking care Martí checked the newspapers and produced statistics about the numbers that were coming from the different countries; he also listed the contributions made or the dangers presented by each group. The most numerous were the Irish, whose only contribution was that of cheerfully performing the most degrading labor. The greatest danger lay in the accumulation of thousands of these immigrants in the large cities and the wielding of their combined vote for an unworthy type of politician. Moreover, they brought with them no crafts and increased the prison population by their idleness and drunkenness.

The Germans were another powerful factor as an element of the new population. Martí called them serious, responsible, and hard working. They were self-centered and lacked a love for humanity, but he thought they could soon be absorbed by the native element. Their only danger, which was a serious one, was that of introducing warped principles of government. Martí found them guilty of having caused the Haymarket Riot in Chicago in 1886 and of training men in the methods of destruction and the doctrines of anarchism.

A third group was made up of Italians who were only beginning to come in major figures after the middle of the decade. Martí's conclusion about them was that they were not altogether undesirable but that they should be required by law to live decently and to forego laziness!

The Chinese immigrants were granted Martí's sympathy and praise. They were thrifty, industrious, and clean; furthermore they were law-abiding, never attacking anyone and scarcely defending themselves. Their only flaw was that they did not bring wives, and, to Martí, "un pueblo sin mujeres no es simpático.....El hombre casado inspiraLa mujer es la nobleza del hombre."¹

Pondering the effect of this influx of other ideals Martí made the following analysis:

...se está rehaciendo, como se rehace la de la tierra, la cara nacional. El aluvión ha traído de todas partes, y ha echado sobre el substratum yankee, la tierra fértil nueva. Ni la religión puritana, ni el gobierno republicano mismo primitivo, brennen bien en el nuevo terreno: terreno exuberante, pero lleno de ortigas europeas, y de plantas glotonas.²

Another phase of North American civilization which displeased and grieved Martí was that of popular amusements. Anything grosero was foreign to his cultured soul, and what he heard most noisily proclaimed was prize-fighting, which to him was the culmination of brutality, and which he considered our national sport. His attention was also drawn by football, in which he glimpsed a threat to education; by the senseless walking marathons of several hundred miles, which left the participants more dead than alive; by the grotesque and satiric negro minstrels; and by the excesses of Coney Island. However, he admitted the value of Coney Island as an escape from the pressure of life in New York City. It was a "pillow" on which the burning heads of fevered thousands were cooled. Of its frequenters he remarked that these tranquil people who were disturbed only by the covetousness of wealth enjoyed an absolute lack of visible sadness.

Features which amused the Cuban observer were the Wild West shows and exhibits of Indian life sponsored by Buffalo Bill on Staten Island. He mused long and commented at length on the way of life he saw at the Indian camp, on the swiftness of the Indian ponies, on the buffalo chase, and on the display of the western romanticism of which he had read.

Winter sports and entertainments greatly pleased Martí. Ice skating and sleigh riding were poetic when treated by his imaginative pen. Indoor entertainments--lectures and opera--were dear to his heart. He applauded the dignity of earning one's livelihood by lecturing and recommended it to his fellow Hispano-Americans, particularly to the scholars of Caracas whose intellectual companionship he had recently been enjoying. In opera Martí was thoroughly at home, but even opera in New York had its drawback, for he sensed no bond of emotion or sympathy uniting the audience. This lack he attributed to the scant culture of the newly rich immigrant social climbers, a criticism which he applied to the society that he saw at the great balls in New York which he attended in the capacity of newspaper reporter, relaying and interpreting his observations to La Nación of Buenos Aires, or to La Opinión Nacional of Caracas, or other periodicals of Mexico, Cuba, and Uruguay.

Martí's criterion of culture was lofty, and he was satisfied here with nothing short of what sprang from Boston or its environs. He cherished great respect for the cradle of North American ideals and education, as may be seen from the following:

Pero es lo cierto que por esa natural y sencilla arrogancia que da la superioridad legítima de la inteligencia, y por el mejoramiento que viene al espíritu de su roce con ideas y gentes que gustan de ellas,--distínguese de los demás habitantes de la nación, sin gran dificultad, a un bostoniano.³

New England was famous for its colleges, its customs, and its learned men. As examples he cited Motley, Emerson, Longfellow, Ripley, Dana, and Lowell, and credited Harvard and Yale with the education of these prohombres. Nevertheless, as institutions of modern learning these two schools, together with Amherst, Princeton, Rutgers, Columbia, and others of the older seats of learning, fell short in Martí's judgment because to read Homer in Greek and Vergil in Latin was mental adornment and not essential to the needs of the day. There was one university, however, which he considered near perfect: Cornell. The fact that one could study both letters and sciences there appealed to him because:

La educación tiene un deber ineludible para con el hombre,--no cumplirlo es crimen: conformarle a su tiempo--sin desviarlo de la grandiosa y final tendencia humana. Que el hombre viva en analogía con el universo, y con su época; para lo cual no le sirven el Latín y el Griego.⁴

The question of what kind of education was suitable for women was one that called for much comment. Sometimes Martí favored a masculine education for women which would enable them to understand and aid their husbands; sometimes he deplored the kind of learning that would unfit women for homemakers. Among his first articles written in the United States he expressed surprise at the strength and decision of the women of this country, and repeatedly throughout his North American Scenes did he voice regret at the absence of languor and the sweet apathy of the South American women. Here, he said, he had never been tempted to fall in love; he had never found his "two beautiful eyes" as he had in every other country through which he had passed. He did not deny either the beauty or the intelligence of the North American woman; he only lamented her masculine qualities.

There were a few individual women, such as Clara Barton, Louisa May Alcott, and Lydia Pinkham, whom he praised for their accomplishments, but in general he did not like the studied coldness, the practicality, and the love of money of the northern women.

Being a wanderer from the Catholic fold, Martí was exceptionally tolerant of Protestantism. Under whatever guise he found brotherly love, he exalted the agency responsible for it. Religious dogma seems not to have been an essential part of Martí's adoration because, in writing about a conference of free thinkers, he praised it as an enciclopedia hablada and then ended his discussion by saying:

Y nosotros agregamos que, besando en la frente a Cristo muerto en la cruz por la redención de todos, hagan de sus maderos instrumentos del trabajo humano.⁵

He took to task any religion that offered no aid to suffering humanity. Throughout thirty-eight pages he extended his defense of Father McGlynn, a New York priest who was excommunicated for rebelling against the Catholic hierarchy in voting for the Labor Party.

Anything that was called religion interested Martí. He discussed the cults and "isms," orthodox and unorthodox, exposing fanaticism and commanding liberalism. Forms and those who live by them perish, he contended, when he saw that the churches that battled for conventional rites were deserted. He taught that liberty should be cherished because it inspires religious well-being in man; he even questioned whether the Catholic doctrine could exist among free people without harming them. Liberty to him was a definitive religion; therefore he bowed to the rebels who defied the staid old cults that had not justified their existence.

To these independent thinkers belonged Henry Ward Beecher and Phillips Brooks, figures of the day that commanded his attention. Of the latter he spoke thus:

Eran muchos los que se detenían a verlo President Cleveland pasar; pero más eran los que iban a oír en la iglesia de la Trinidad, en la cabeza de la calle, la iglesia de la alta espiga y las campanas de orquesta, el último sermón de los que predicó a los hombres de negocios, con casa llena y fama grande, el sacerdote Phillips Brooks, hombre gigantesco, que habla como si derramase

las palabras sobre el corazon, con un arte que a la vez manda y suplica, y abundancia de voces que parece descargar de catapulta, y el único gesto llevarse la mano a la frente, y echarse atrás el cabello plateado, como para dar más campo y luz a las ideas fogosas.⁶

...se sabe que, de Beecher a él Brooks⁷ nadie ha sacudido así las almas, ni ha puesto menos teatro aparente y tema mundano en sus sermones, ni ha hablado de cosas religiosas con más semejanza de libertad y de razón.⁷

Brooks⁷ no habla "como sacerdote de oficio, sino como hombre hermano"--que no quiere saber de este dogma ni aquél; sino de lo esencial de la fe en Dios....⁸

And of Beecher he said:

Y entre otros muchos hechos dos hay, que no son para olvidarlos. Es el uno que Beecher, quien a pesar de su moderado atrevimiento, será juzgado con justicia, no sólo como el mejor orador sagrado, sino como uno de los gloriosos atrevidos de este país,--ha comenzado una serie de sermones en que pretende, del brazo de la teología y ciencias que la ayudan, conformar el espíritu religioso al espíritu científico: ¡como si, a manera de perfume, no se escapara de la ciencia, la religiosidad! ¡Mientras más hondo, más alto!⁹

Martí's prime interest in the United States was the study of our democracy. "La elaboración de esta República" was what he wanted to picture in "hechos menores," for "cada día es un poema" and "cada número del Herald es, a su modo, un poema." Martí drew largely from the New York Herald as his authority on questions of the day. The 1881 New York state elections were the first that he witnessed and he was soon aware of the necessity of reform within both parties. In writing of these elections he took the occasion to explain to his readers in South America the background of each party, the machinery, the boss system, examples of corruption, and all that would make clear what was desirable and what was unworthy in our type of government. Throughout the decade, as the system developed under his observation, he analyzed, interpreted, and discussed with excellent understanding the details of a democratic form of government, recommending to the leaders of the new republics to the South books to be studied and errors to be avoided.

In a light vein Martí described a political convention:

Y ¡cuán pintoresca es una población en día de convención! Rebosan los hoteles; resuenan alegres bandas; despléganse banderas: oyense de lejos los vítores y silbos de las juntas tumultuosas; grandes grupos bulliciosos llenan las aceras, discuten por las calles, detiénense ante las puertas. Vense caras robustas de hombres del campo; gallardos caballeros, políticos de ciudad; escúchanse fanfarronadas, amenazas, denuestos, risas, chistes; llénanse las arcas de los mostradores de bebidas. Y luego de electa la mesa de la Convención, de pronunciado por el Presidente el discurso de orden, que viene a ser un programa del partido; de leída la plataforma, en que las esperanzas, propósitos y creencias del partido se condensan en un número breve de resoluciones; luego de sustentados los candidatos a los diversos empleos por sus respectivos partidarios, y de electos en votación, y de anunciada la lista de candidatos definitivos, --suelen aires marciales, humean en las estaciones de ferrocarril trenes extraordinarios, vacíanse los hoteles, y vuélvense los combatientes a toda prisa a sus lares desiertos, cargados los unos con los laureles del triunfo, y los otros con sus esperanzas muertas, a trabajar en junto por la victoria de los candidatos definitivamente señalados por la Convención. Tal señalamiento es sagrado. El enemigo tiene que trabajar por el enemigo. Al interés del hombre, servido por la comunidad en la satisfacción de otros intereses.... Esta disciplina explica esas compactas masas, esos súbitos y felices acuerdos, ese soocimiento rápido de rencores que parecían terribles e insaciables, esas admirables victorias del sufragio en los grandes combates de este pueblo.¹⁰

In addition to the foregoing phases of our national life, the customs of Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, and Easter, unusual happenings in the country, such as the Charleston earthquake, the Johnstown flood, the building of Brooklyn Bridge, the dedication of the Statue of Liberty, and a host of other topics are given to us through the eyes of José Martí in the North American Scenes which enable us to look at ourselves as from another planet. Many savory morsels are to be found there that do not appear in our own histories, and the name of Martí is only now beginning to become known in the United States.

This body of North American costumbrismo not only offered to the South American reader lectura amena but also fashioned his thinking about the "colossus" of the North-- a word used repeatedly by Martí. In his political writings he set Mexico and the Central American republics on their guard against the United States. He advised parents that there was nothing for their sons to study in North America that could not be learned as well under their own ombú tree; on the other hand there were many undesirable customs which might be acquired in the United States. His accusations of materialism and imperialism which have echoed and reechoed through the Andes have become a chorus in crescendo. Any re-evaluation of the United States for Latin America would have to be initiated in this country, and an investigation of Martí's judgment of us would be a logical beginning.

1. José Martí, Obras Completas, edited by Gonzalo de Quesada y Miranda. 74 vols., Havana: Editorial Trópico, 1936-1949, XXXI, 191.
2. Ibid., XXX, 66.
3. Ibid., XXIII, 32.
4. Ibid., p. 37.
5. Ibid., XXIX, 201.
6. Ibid., XXXIX, 43.
7. Ibid., p. 47.
8. Ibid., p. 49.
9. Ibid., XXXI, 116.
10. Ibid., XXVII . 74-75.

A Commentary on Villaurrutia's
DECIMA MUERTE

By Frank Dauster, Rutgers University

Although the poetic production of Xavier Villaurrutia is comparatively restricted, consisting of three brief volumes--Reflejos (1926), Nostalgia de la Muerte (second and definitive edition, 1946), and Canto a la Primavera y Otros Poemas (1948)--it represents one of the major achievements of contemporary Latin American poetry. His phantasmagoric world of specters and dream-fantasy, expressed in a taut, opaque style classical in its economy and concision, is a remarkable esthetic achievement.

His work illustrates a major tendency in modern poetry: the preoccupation with the problem of death. "Décima Muerte," his finest single poem, investigates this problem in its relation to his personal situation: a personality which was unable to burst through the confines of solipsism, and the knowledge that he suffered from a cardiac condition which could end his life at any moment.

"Décima Muerte" is rooted in the Renaissance tradition of the Petrarchan love poem. On this framework of the poet and his beloved, Villaurrutia constructed a double symbolism: his own imminent end, and his concept of a personalized death. These two levels are implicit throughout, so that each of the ten décimas of which the poem is composed represents a double intellectual-emotional complex of attitudes. It is the poet's reaction to his own impending death, and at the same time an allegory of death as the Beloved.

The first décima presents the poet in the guise of lover, as he meditates on the arrival of his beloved:

¡Qué prueba de la existencia
habrá mayor que la suerte
de estar viviendo sin verte
y muriendo en tu presencia!
Esta lúcida conciencia
de amar a lo nunca visto
y de esperar lo imprevisto;
este caer sin llegar
es la angustia de pensar
que puesto que muero existo.

This is no ordinary beloved, this never-seen mistress. She is the personification of death. No longer an intellectual concept or a mere physical fact, Death has here become an individual.

At the same time Villaurrutia is parodying Descartes' Cogito; ergo sum. Cogito is equated with muero, thought with death, and death with existence. This type of conceptual play is a constant in Villaurrutia's poetry, and serves as the point of departure for the theme of "Décima Muerte."

In the second décima this equivalence is developed further:

Si en todas partes estás,
en el agua y en la tierra,
en el aire que me encierra
y en el incendio voraz;
y si a todas partes vas
conmigo en el pensamiento,
en el soplo de mi aliento
y en mi sangre confundida,
¿no serás, Muerte, en mi vida,
agua, fuego, polvo y viento?

Death is identical with Empedocles' four principles of existence. She is, therefore, the single principle surpassing all the others: life equals death, and living is a process of dying.

In both form and content, this stanza recalls a multitude of poems in the style of the Petrarquistas. The four elements mentioned singly--water, air, fire, and earth--are then collected in the final line. This is the technique which Dámaso Alonso has called "dispersion and recollection," and here it recalls two of the great lines of the Baroque era, Gonzora's "...en tierra, en polvo, en humo, en sombra, en nada," and Sor Juana's "...es cadáver, es polvo, es sombra, es nada." This is no coincidence. Both these poems express a profound knowledge of the role of death in existence, and "Décima Muerte" is of the same family. It is a song to Death, to the finality which has become the "Coy Mistress" to be courted in haste.

The third décima continues the mode of allusion which has been used to set the theme. The source is the famous copla employed by Lope and Santa Teresa de Jesús:

Ven, muerte, tan escondida,
que no te sienta venir,
porque el placer de morir
no me vuelva a dar la vida.

Within the framework of the love poem, the poet awaits the arrival of the beloved. On the level of symbolic meaning,

he hopes only that Death come quietly and without warning:

Si tienes manos, que sean
de un tacto sutil y blando,
apenas sensible cuando
anestesiado me crean;
y que tus ojos me vean
sin mirarme, de tal suerte
que nada me desconcierte
ni tu vista ni tu roce,
para no sentir ni un goce
ni un dolor contigo, Muerte.

In the fourth décima, this allusional mode is abandoned. He awaits the arrival of the beloved, in order that her coming resolve the opaque world of shadows in which he dwells:

Por caminos ignorados,
por hendiduras secretas,
por las misteriosas vetas
de troncos recién cortados,
te ven mis ojos cerrados
entrar en mi alcoba oscura
a convertir mi envoltura
opaca, febril, cambiante,
en materia de diamante
luminosa, eterna y pura.

The dominion of Death extends to all things. She is at once the beloved and the principle of life, and through each opening of existence she comes to the dreaming lover.

The Petrarchan lover eagerly anticipates the arrival of the beloved in order that he may savor completely the experience of her arrival. In "Décima Muerte," the poet dares not sleep, that he may remain master of himself even in Death, that he may die awake and aware:

No duermo para que al verte
llegar lenta y apagada,
para que al oír pausada
tu voz que silencios vierte,
para que al tocar la nada
que envuelve tu cuerpo yerto,
para que a tu olor desierto
pueda, sin sombra de sueño,
saber que de ti me adueño,
sentir que me muero despierto.

This is the lover anxious to possess his mistress, but in a possession whose meaning is a desperate attempt to retain self control in the most harrowing moment of each man's existence--the moment when that existence ceases.

In these first five décimas, the internal structure of each stanza has been largely conceptual, based on the contrast and comparison of terms. Thus the baroque antithesis of the fourth décima:

...opaca, febril, cambiante...
...luminosa, eterna y pura.

This is also the source of the conceptual play of these lines of the first stanza:

...estar viviendo sin verte
y muriendo en tu presencia!

...puesto que muero existo.

This antithetical procedure is also used in the creation of some startling images. The beloved is described in terms diametrically opposed to the usual amorous terminology: "tu cuerpo yerto," "tu olor desierto." This imagery is carried to the extreme: the Deadly Mistress, while retaining her corporeal aspect, becomes the incarnation of the principle of Death:

...al verte/ ...lenta y apagada...
...al oír.../tu voz que silencios vierte
...al tocar la nada...

The sixth décima describes this final embrace, beyond space and time, so far beyond all previous experience that it may even transcend its own limits to create a new zone of existence:

La aguja del instantero
recorrerá su cuadrante,
todo cabrá en un instante
del espacio verdadero
que, ancho, profundo y señojo,
será elástico a tu paso
de modo que el tiempo cierto
prolongará nuestro abrazo
y será posible, acaso,
vivir después de haber muerto.

Décima VII is a remarkable inversion of the technique known as poesía a lo divino, in which erotic imagery is used to express the mystical union with God, the Ultimate Reality. Villaurrutia, while apparently writing of the emotional impact of the sexual act, is describing the moment of death. In this parallel, his attitude toward the fact

of death becomes completely clear. The almost playful intellectual response of the first stanza, with only the single word angustia to indicate an emotional reaction, has become an emotional and intellectual longing to experience the ultimate union:

En el roce, en el contacto,
en la inefable delicia
de la suprema caricia
que desemboca en el acto,
hay el misterioso pacto
del espasmo delirante
en que un cielo alucinante
y un infierno de agonía
se funden cuando eres mía
y soy tuyo en un instante.

The eighth décima expresses most completely the extent to which Death has become an individual. In itself, it could serve as a love poem to a younger and more alluring mistress. It is precisely this which enhances the actual significance: Death is an enticing mistress. There is no horror as the poet speaks of the extent to which she has permeated his consciousness; he has passed beyond such facile reactions to a more complex understanding:

¡Hasta en la ausencia estás viva!
Porque te encuentro en el hueco
de una forma y en el eco
de una nota fugitiva;
porque en mi propia saliva
fundes tu sabor sombrío,
y a cambio de lo que es mío
me dejas sólo el temor
de hallar hasta en el sabor
la presencia del vacío.

A new note is injected in the ninth décima. If Death is personal and unique, what will become of her after the poet's death?

Si te llevo en mí prendida
y te acaricio y escondo;
si te alimento en el fondo
de mi más secreta herida;
si mi muerte te da vida
y goce mi frenesi,
¿qué será, Muerte, de ti
cuando al salir yo del mundo,
deshecho el nudo profundo,
tengas que salir de mí?

This mocking challenge introduces the tenth and final
décima:

En vano amenazas, Muerte,
cerrar la boca a mi herida
y poner fin a mi vida
con una palabra inerte.
¡Qué puedo pensar al verte,
si en mi angustia verdadera
tuve que violar la espera;
si en vista de tu tardanza
para llenar mi esperanza
no hay hora en que yo no muera!

The poet does not fear the coming of Death; she may threaten him in vain. In a concentration of bitter irony, he points out his victory over her, for in his life of constant anticipation, he has already violated the hour of their meeting. In this existence whose Ultimate Reality is Death, there is no hour in which he does not die.

Baudelaire's View of America

By James S. Patty, University of Tennessee

Early in 1953, an editorial in Life stirred up a tempest in the North Atlantic teapot, already troubled by the rumblings of American impatience and French distrust. The writer had attempted to bring France to her senses by laying out in detail and with would-be comic exaggeration "a strictly unin-intellectual U. S. citizen's concept of government in France" (Life, January 26, 1953). Ignoring the editor's admission that this concept might have little basis in fact, people in France reacted violently, even irrationally. The resulting display of international ill-will was, as of that date, but the latest and most spectacular illustration of the important rôle which stereotyped thinking plays in the field of international relations.

This incident only serves to show how deeply rooted is the tendency for people to think (if you could call it that) of foreign countries and populations in terms of stereotyped images, and we have just seen how serious the consequences of such thinking can be. I now propose for your consideration what might be called a case-history in xenophobia--Baudelaire's attitude toward America. Most Americans probably feel that only the ignorant and the uninformed show this type of thought pattern. But the examination of Baudelaire's anti-Americanism will show us the rather discouraging spectacle of an almost infantile attitude toward America on the part of a great poet, a man of keen intelligence and delicate sensibility, a man of broad culture and considerable learning, a man who was, moreover, in almost daily contact with the work of a great American writer for well over a decade.

I am referring, of course, to Baudelaire's translations of Poe, and I believe that Baudelaire's sympathy (taking the word in its original and strongest sense) with Poe is the key to his anti-American complex. It would be superfluous at this late date to attempt to speak in detail of Baudelaire's admiration for Poe. Suffice it to say that Baudelaire's own letters and journals, the translations themselves, the testimony of Asselineau and other friends of Baudelaire, the investigations of such scholars as Léon Lemonnier and W. T. Bandy--all these provide much evidence of Baudelaire's preoccupation with Poe and of the elective affinity which linked him to his American idol.

Baudelaire had little actual contact with American life or letters except through the medium of Poe's work and the secondary material he accumulated in an effort to know Poe and his world. Except for Longfellow and Emerson, it is doubtful if Baudelaire really knew any American author save

as discussed or quoted by Poe. Of course, Poe's criticism gave him a second-hand panorama of American literature in the 1830's and 1840's, but, except for the theoretical essays, he did not translate the criticism, and there is little or no evidence to show that he paid much attention to it. Moreover, Griswold's edition omitted great quantities of Poe's critical work. As for Poe's depiction of American life in the poems and tales, it is difficult to say what kind of picture Baudelaire would have received from "The Raven" or "The Fall of the House of Usher" or even from "The Gold-Bug." Clearly, as far as literary sources in Poe are concerned, Baudelaire found the seeds of his anti-Americanism in such things as "Some Words with a Mummy," "Mellonta Tauta," "The Poetic Principle," "The Philosophy of Furniture," and the "Marginalia."¹

Baudelaire took no trouble to conceal his anti-American feelings, and deeply resented the wide-spread admiration for America which he observed in France. He admitted to Sainte-Beuve that his 1856 article on Poe, "Edgar Poe, sa vie et ses œuvres," (HE, pp. vii-xxx) was designed to contradict "toutes les opinions à la mode sur les Etats-Unis" (CG, p. 380), and that his next article on Poe ("Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe," NHE, pp. v-xxiii) would be, in large part, "presque une pensée antiaméricaine" (CG, p. 382).² This feeling, like most of Baudelaire's antipathies, reached its greatest intensity during his stay in Belgium (1864-1866), and indeed he tended to associate Belgium and America in his mind as the two most horrible examples of a democratic and industrial society.

So, in February, 1866, when he was approaching the very nadir of his wretched experience in Belgium and only a few weeks before the violent onset of his final malady, he wrote that it was time to tell the truth about Belgium, as well as about Americā, "autre Eldorado de la canaille française..." (CG, V, 274). In the book on Belgium itself, he cried out in disgust: "Comme on chantait chez nous, il y a vingt ans, la liberté, la gloire et le bonheur des Etats-Unis d'Amérique! Sottise analogue à propos de la Belgique" (OP, III, 19). In another place he likened the two countries on the basis of their melting-pot populations (OP, III, 20). Again, he called Belgium and the United States the "enfants gâtés des gazettes" (OP, III, 23), and there are several other references, all ill-tempered, to the good press enjoyed by America and Belgium in France (OP, III, 131, 215). At one point he dragged England into the picture by remarking that Belgian elections, although corrupt, were cheaper than those in England and the United States (OP, III, 133-4).

What, then did Baudelaire see in America that aroused such bitterness in him? First of all, we may say that for Baudelaire, America was but the telescopic image of bourgeois France, with all her materialism and philistinism enlarged to gigantic proportions. As I have suggested, the telescope that Baudelaire used was Poe's work, and we can safely add that the principle of distortion (for his picture certainly was a distorted one) was his sympathy for Poe's misfortunes, so like his own. Baudelaire, in fact, said as much himself when he wrote to his mother: "Comprends-tu maintenant pourquoi, au milieu de l'affreuse solitude qui m'environne, j'ai si bien compris le génie d'Edgar Poe, et pourquoi j'ai si bien écrit son abominable vie?" (CG, I, 195). It is not surprising, then, that the most detailed and virulent expressions of his anti-Americanism should appear in the three articles which he wrote on Poe (1852, 1856, and 1857).

In the first of these celebrated documents, Baudelaire develops nearly all the themes in his symphony against the New World. The basic one is that Poe was an idealistic artist trapped in a Philistine society, and Baudelaire sounded this theme almost from the very beginning of his first essay on Poe. One critic of Poe was ridiculed for saying that Poe could become "a making-money author" (to use Baudelaire's own quaint English of 1852) if he would more nearly adapt his genius to the American milieu; another was scorned for declaring that talent was more lucrative than genius; and a third is reported, in a tone of shock and disgust, as complaining that Poe wrote in a style too far above the ordinary (OP, I, 248).³ Then comes a passage which reflects the efforts Baudelaire made to get first-hand information on Poe from Americans visiting in Paris. He seems to have one particular such effort in mind, and he alludes to it briefly later on. Fortunately Asselineau has left us an even more amusing and vivid sketch of this same incident. As Asselineau tells the story, he and Baudelaire went to a hotel on the Boulevard des Capucines to consult an American writer supposed to have known Poe:

Nous le trouvâmes en caleçon et en chemise, au milieu d'une flottille de chaussures de toutes sortes qu'il essayait avec l'assistance d'un cordonnier. Mais Baudelaire ne lui fit pas grâce: il fallut, bon gré mal gré, qu'il subît l'interrogatoire, entre une paire de bottines et une paire d'escarpins. L'opinion de notre hôte ne fut pas favorable à l'auteur du "Chat noir." Je me rappelle notamment qu'il nous dit que M. Poë [sic] était un esprit bizarre et dont la conversation n'était pas du tout conséquutive. Sur l'escalier, Baudelaire me dit en enfongant son chapeau avec violence: "Ce n'est qu'un Yankee!" (OP, I, 574).

Baudelaire, presumably with several such experiences behind him, shows no mercy to Americans in general. Speak to one of them about Poe, and he will admit Poe's genius but go on to complain of his alcoholism and his erratic way of life. Object that the artist in a democracy is subject to the tyranny of public opinion, and the American will hotly defend his country's honor and launch insults at Europe. Then Baudelaire gives a sketch of the American national character which I regard as central to this paper:

L'américain est un être positif, vain de sa force industrielle, et un peu jaloux de l'ancien continent. Quant à avoir pitié d'un poète que la douleur et l'isolement pouvaient rendre fou, il n'en a pas le temps. Il est si fier de sa jeune grandeur, il a une foi si naïve dans la toute-puissance de l'industrie, il est tellement convaincu qu'elle finira par manger le Diable, qu'il a une certaine pitié pour toutes ces révasseries. En avant, dit-il, en avant, et négligeons nos morts. Il passerait volontiers sur les âmes solitaires et libres, et les foulerait aux pieds avec autant d'insouciance que ses immenses lignes de fer les forêts abattues, et ses bateaux-monstres les débris d'un bateau incendié la veille. Il est si pressé d'arriver. Le temps et l'argent, tout est là. (OP, I, 249)

This passage is a digest of Baudelaire's view of America, a view which we may summarize in these four propositions: (1) America is young, vigorous, optimistic; (2) she has an inferiority complex about her cultural shortcomings; (3) she is entirely materialistic, concerned only with industrial development, mechanization, business, and money; and, conversely, (4) she is scornful of the past and of tradition but especially of the spiritual, the non-utilitarian, and the unconventional. In short, America corresponded perfectly to Baudelaire's conception of a democracy, a term which he generally used in its most literal sense of "rule by the mob" and always in a pejorative sense.

We can trace these themes through all of Baudelaire's expressions of his anti-Americanism. The first theme, that of America's youth, vigor, and optimism, is not treated at great length or very frequently, but is nevertheless an integral part of Baudelaire's image of America. Thus he could say that Poe dazzled "son pays jeune et informe" by his brilliant intellect (OP, I, 272), and describe Poe's nature as revealing "une précocité vraiment américaine" (HE, p. xii). Similarly, he explained that Poe drank "pas en gourmand, mais en barbare, avec une activité et une économie de temps tout à fait américaines" (HE, p. xxvi). A like concept underlies his description of the enormous activity displayed on the American literary scene:

Jeune et vieille à la fois, l'Amérique bavarde et radote avec une volubilité étonnante. Qui pourrait compter ses poètes? Ils sont innombrables. Ses bas-bleus? Ils encombrent les revues. . . . Il y a là-bas comme ici, mais plus encore qu'ici, des littérateurs qui ne savent pas l'orthographe; une activité puérile, inutile; des compilateurs à foison, des ressasseurs, des plagiaires de plagiats et des critiques de critiques" (NHE, pp. vi-vii).

The idea, barely suggested above, that America is in her dotation (or second childhood) is more clearly presented in a passage in which Baudelaire describes the history of civilization in terms of the periods of human life: the old age of civilization, which he says is just beginning, "est marqué par la suprématie de l'Amérique et de l'industrie" (AR, p. 127).

Hand in hand with the national childishness (or perhaps adolescence) goes a grudging respect for one's elders, a sense of inferiority in the cultural sphere, which appears occasionally in the American national character. In addition to the words on this subject in Baudelaire's sketch of the typical American, we might notice his own criticism of Poe (perhaps the only one to which he ever gave voice) for yielding, in the poem "To Helen," to "le faible américain, littérature trop jeune, pour le pastiche" (OP, I, 258)--this apropos of the classical allusions in the poem: "des barques de Nicée, de naïades, de la gloire et de la beauté grecques, et de la lampe de Psyché" (Ibid.). According to Baudelaire, the great success of "The Raven" among American readers stemmed from "un rythme vaste et compliqué, un savant entrelacement de rimes chatouillant leur orgueil national un peu jaloux des tours de force européens" (OP, I, 263).

Perhaps we could link to this theme the rather ambiguous position which Baudelaire adopted toward what he called Poe's jonglerie, his fondness for brilliant but obvious legerdemain (exercises in cryptography, unveiling the mystery of Maelzel's chess-player, pseudo-scientific hoaxes, and the like). To Sainte-Beuve he wrote in 1856 that Poe was American only in that he was a jongleur (CG, I, 382). In the Poe article of that year he elaborated his theory of Poe as a jongleur when he wrote that, as for Poe the artist, he could "introduire le lecteur dans les mystères de sa fabrication, m'étendre longuement sur cette portion de génie américain qui le fait se réjouir d'une difficulté vaincue, d'une énigme expliquée, d'un tour de force réussi,--qui le pousse à se jouer avec une volupté enfantine et presque perverse dans le monde des probabilités et des conjectures, et à créer des canards auxquels son art subtil a donné une vie vraisemblable. Personne ne nierait que Poe ne soit un jongleur merveilleux" (HE, pp. xxvii-xxviii). However, Baudelaire insists that he was much more than that.

This theme of jonglerie, with its emphasis on the American fascination with what Baudelaire calls "ces miracles matériels" (HE, p. xxviii) and what we would probably call "gimmicks" today, serves as a natural transition to the third theme--America as a land dominated by material concerns, preoccupied with industry, machinery, and money, admiring only the practical and the immediately useful. This, I believe, is the pattern at the center of Baudelaire's image of America, for this is the aspect of America which he mentions more often than any other. For him, America was "un grand établissement de compétibilité" (OP, I, 248), "une grande barbarie éclairée au gaz" (HE, p. ix), "ce monde épris des perfectionnements matériels, . . . cette société avide d'étonnements, amoureuse de la vie, mais surtout d'une vie pleine d'excitations" (NHE, p. vii), "un monde goulu, affamés de materialités" (Ibid.), "cette cohue de vendeurs et d'acheteurs" (NHE, p. xiii), "un vaste cabaret, où le consommateur afflue et traite d'affaires sur des tables souillées, au tintamarre des vilains propos" (Ibid.).

For Baudelaire, this obsession with money explains the vogue of literary lectures: they are financial ventures. "Le public vient ou ne vient pas. Dans ce dernier cas, c'est une spéculation manquée, comme toute autre spéculation commerciale aventureuse" (OP, I, 261).⁴ Baudelaire's detestation for this side of America explains his special hatred for Benjamin Franklin, who evidently epitomized for him the thrifty, sententious businessman, indeed the typical American. In projecting the character of the valet in his never-written play, "La fin de Don Juan," Baudelaire planned that his Leporello (or Sganarelle) would be a "personnage froid, raisonnable et vulgaire, ne parlant sans cesse que de vertu et d'économie; il associe volontiers ces deux idées; il a une espèce d'intelligence à la Franklin. C'est un coquin comme Franklin. C'est la future bourgeoisie qui va bientôt remplacer la noblesse tombante" (OP, I, 79). Elsewhere, he calls Franklin "l'inventeur de la morale de comptoir, le héros d'un siècle voué à la matière" (NHE, p. xiv), and in still another place he refers, no doubt facetiously, to Franklin's capture of lightning as the dethronement of Jupiter (OP, I, 239).

There is one passage, however, which reflects Baudelaire's anti-Americanism in the clearest, yet at the same time in the darkest, tones. In the somber extract from "Fusées" which begins, "Le monde va finir," he describes the collapse of civilization. There is but a passing allusion to America, but it is a seminal one: "La mécanique nous aura tellement américanisés, le progrès aura si bien atrophié en nous toute la partie, que rien, parmi les rêveries sanguinaires, sacrilèges ou anti-naturelles des utopistes, ne pourra être comparé à ses résultats positifs" (OP, II, 74). Baudelaire goes on to speak of the disappearance of private property and religion, and then continues:

Mais ce n'est pas particulièrement par des institutions politiques que se manifestera la ruine universelle, ou le progrès universel; car peu importe le nom. Ce sera par l'avilissement des coeurs. . . Alors, le fils fuitra la famille, non pas à dix-huit ans, mais à douze, émancipé par sa précocité gloutonne; il la fuitra, non pas pour chercher des aventures héroïques, non pas pour délivrer une beauté prisonnière dans une tour, non pas pour immortaliser un galetas par de sublimes pensées, mais pour fonder un commerce, pour s'enrichir, et pour faire concurrence à son infâme papa, fondateur et actionnaire d'un journal qui répandra les lumières et qui ferait considérer le Siecle d'alors comme un suppôt de la superstition. . . Alors, ce qui ressemblera à la vertu que dis-je, --tout ce qui ne sera pas l'ardeur vers Plutus sera réputé un immense ridicule. La justice, si, à cette époque fortunée, il peut encore exister une justice, fera interdire les citoyens qui ne sauront pas faire fortune.-- Ton épouse, ô Bourgeois! ta chaste moitié, dont la légitimité fait pour toi la poésie, introduisant désormais dans la légalité une infamie irréprochable, gardienne vigilante et amoureuse de ton coffre-fort, ne sera plus que l'idéal parfait de la femme entretenue. Ta fille, avec une nubilité enfantine, rêvera, dans son berceau, qu'elle se vend un million, et toi-même, ô Bourgeois, . . . tu n'y retrouveras rien à redire, tu ne regretteras rien (OP, II, 75-6).

Small wonder that Baudelaire, as he looked across the Seine estuary from Honfleur to the bustling wharves of Le Havre which linked France and America, should see it as "un port noir et américain" (CG, IV, 312).

To this theme we may link as a kind of pendant Baudelaire's denunciations of the American tendency to apply utilitarian standards in the domain of aesthetics. It seemed to him that America was "le glorieux pays de la morale utile" (NHE, p. xxiii) and "un pays où l'idée d'utilité, la plus hostile du monde à l'idée de beauté, prime et domine toutes choses" (NHE, p. xiv). Poe, then, could not and did not find favor in a country where the most honorable critic (i.e., the one most subservient to public taste), assigning a single aim to all the faculties and types of production, "cherchera dans un livre de poésie les moyens de perfectionner la conscience" (Ibid.). Baudelaire naturally shared Poe's distaste for the Transcendental school and the Boston circle, and managed to saddle them with a utilitarian aesthetic. Speaking of the didactic heresy in his essay on Gautier, Baudelaire wrote: "Je ne sais quelle lourde nuée, venue de Genève, de Boston ou de l'enfer, a intercepté les beaux rayons du soleil de l'esthétique" (AR, p. 155). Hence his allusion to the "ennuyeuse école bostonienne" (AR, p. 18)

in connection with Emerson. Be it noted that, in one of his rare moments of impartiality, he admits that "il n'est pas besoin d'aller jusqu'à Boston pour rencontrer l'hérésie en question" (NHE, p. xix).

We have only to turn over this coin--America's materialism and utilitarianism--to find our fourth theme, perhaps the dearest one to Baudelaire's heart: America's hatred for the spiritual, the non-utilitarian, the unconventional. For to Baudelaire it appeared that a like hatred in France accounted for his own wretched situation as a writer. As for Poe, "étouffé qu'il était par l'atmosphère américaine" (NHE, p. vii), imprisoned in "une vaste cage" (OP, I, 248), in "une vaste prison qu'il parcourait avec l'agitation fiévreuse d'un être fait pour respirer dans un monde plus amoral" (HE, pp. viii-ix)--his drunkenness, his unsteady habits, his Bohemianism, his un-conséquutive conversation, his uncommon ideas were beyond all sympathy and understanding in America. "Jamais aucune société," writes Baudelaire, "n'a absous ces choses-là, encore moins une société Anglaise ou Américaine" (OP, I, 271). What Baudelaire meant by this allusion to the Anglo-Saxon countries can be grasped from his description of his 1856 article on Poe as "ma très longue préface sur la situation des hommes d'imagination dans des sociétés protestantes et marchandes" (CG, I, 297-98).⁵ Of course, Poe's American biographers were unreliable simply because they were Americans: "Ils sont trop bons démocrates pour ne pas haïr leurs grands hommes" (OP, I, 258).

As might be expected, Baudelaire had an explanation for the sad lot of the artist in America: democracy is really but the tyranny of the mob, of public opinion. Conversing with an American, a European (Baudelaire, for instance) could point out that "la Démocratie a bien ses inconvénients, que malgré son masque bienveillant de liberté, elle ne permet pas toujours l'expansion des individualités, qu'il est souvent bien difficile de penser et d'écrire dans un pays où il y a vingt, trente millions de souverains, que d'ailleurs vous avez entendu dire qu'aux Etats-Unis il existait une tyrannie bien plus cruelle et plus inexorable que celle d'un monarque, qui est celle de l'opinion" (OP, I, 249).

In the 1857 article on Poe, the theme is orchestrated thus:

Il sera toujours difficile d'exercer noblement et fructueusement à la fois, l'état d'hommes de lettres sans s'exposer à la diffamation, à la calomnie des impuissants, à l'envie des riches,--cette envie qui est leur châtiment!--aux vengeances de la médiocrité bourgeoise. Mais ce qui est difficile dans une monarchie tempérée ou dans une république régulière, devient presque impraticable dans une espèce de capharnaüm, où chacun, sergent de ville de l'opinion, fait la police au profit de ses vices--ou de ses vertus, c'est tout un. . ." (NHE, p. xiii).

Embedded in the final words of this passage is the bare outline of a fifth theme, which I should like now to add and which will be disposed of briefly: America as hypocrite. In both the 1852 and the 1856 articles, Baudelaire tried to blunt the accusation of drunkenness so often made against Poe by implying that American writers were not all models of sobriety (OP, I, 261; HE, p. xxv), in other words, that they were hypocrites. In the 1857 article he extended this charge to include the country as a whole or at least a large segment of its society. The passage cited at the end of the preceding paragraph is prolonged by Baudelaire on a tone of intense and mordant indignation:

America is a land, où un poète, un romancier d'un pays à esclaves est un écrivain détestable, aux yeux d'un critique abolitioniste,⁶--où l'on ne sait quel est le plus grand scandale,--le débraillé du cynisme ou l'imper-turbabilité de l'hypocrisie biblique. Brûler des nègres enchaînés, coupables d'avoir senti leur joue noire fourmiller du rouge de l'honneur, jouer du revolver dans un parterre de théâtre, établir la polygamie dans les paradis de l'Ouest, que les Sauvages (ce terme a l'air d'une injustice) n'avaient pas encore souillés de ces honteuses utopies, afficher sur les murs, sans doute pour consacrer le principe de la liberté illimitée, la guérison des maladies de neuf mois, tels sont quelques-uns des traits saillants, quelques-unes des illustrations morales du noble pays de Franklin. . . . Il est bon d'appeler sans cesse le regard sur ces merveilles de brutalité, en un temps où l'américomanie est devenue presque une passion de bon ton, à ce point qu'un archevêque a pu nous promettre sans rire que la Providence nous appellerait bientôt à jouir de cet idéal transatlantique! (NHE, pp. xiii-xiv).

Not all the crimes and abuses that Baudelaire denounces in this passage stem from hypocrisy, but the underlying motif is the contrast between America's loudly proclaimed morality and her immoral behavior.

Finally, there is an item which Baudelaire himself regarded as an hors-d'œuvre (OP, III, 212) in the body of his diatribe against Belgium. It is a curious passage dealing with the assassination of Lincoln, a cryptic jumble of typically Baudelairian ideas which, however, it is not too difficult for us to decipher after what we have already seen:

Affaire Lincoln:

Les gens qui traitent Booth de scélérat sont les mêmes qui adorent la Corday.

Lincoln est-il un coquin châtié?

Le gouvernement de Dieu est très compliqué. Le méchant n'est pas nécessaire et divin; mais aussitôt qu'il existe, Dieu se sert de lui pour punir le méchant.⁷

Toujours les moutons de Panurge. Les journalistes adorateurs de l'Amérique et de la Belgique.--Le testament de Booth.⁸ Booth est un brave. Je suis heureux qu'il soit mort de la mort des braves.--Le chirurgien.⁹ (OP, III, 214-5)

Evidently Baudelaire was a French version of the Northern man with Southern principles.¹⁰ With considerable reason, he thought of Poe as a Southerner,¹¹ and on the strength of this conceived a transatlantic sympathy for the South. His admiration for aristocratic societies and his detestation of democracy naturally strengthened this feeling. Hence the above expression of hatred for Lincoln, of admiration for Booth and sympathy for Dr. Mudd.

I believe I have made it abundantly, perhaps superabundantly, clear that, in thinking of America, Baudelaire fell into the all too natural but nonetheless pernicious habit of conceiving a foreign country and its people in terms of some stereotyped image. His anti-Americanism is very nearly a perfect "case" of xenophobia. Prejudice, ignorance, and second-hand information combined to stamp on his brain another copy of the stereotyped picture of America which has circulated in France for well over a century now. These stereotypes are among the greatest stumbling-blocks along the path to international good feeling. That a great writer could be guilty of such unintelligence indicates how grave this problem is and how difficult its solution.

Notes

1. Ideas paralleling Baudelaire's can be found in a number of prominent writers of the Romantic era and, more to the point, in such plausible places as the works of Chateaubriand, De Maistre, and Stendhal. In the "Conclusion" of his Voyage en Amérique, Chateaubriand summarizes the enormous economic and physical growth that has taken place since his trip to America (that is, between 1791 and 1827) and marvels at the ever-growing network of communications, the vast number of ships (including steam-ships; cf. Baudelaire's "bateaux-monstres") on America's lakes and rivers, and the great cities which are "éclairées la nuit" (cf. Baudelaire's "une barbarie éclairée au gaz"). On the negative side, he touches on the national pride (without, however, implying that it is excessive), is disturbed by the possibility that the polyglot immigration from Europe

may destroy America's racial homogeneity, and wonders if "l'esprit mercantile" will come to dominate the country and if "l'intérêt" is becoming the chief national defect (Oeuvres complètes de Chateaubriand Paris: Garnier, 1859-1861⁷, VI, 205-212). In Les soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg, Joseph de Maistre makes some derogatory remarks about America, but his criticisms have little or nothing in common with Baudelaire's. Nevertheless, De Maistre's influence on Baudelaire was so great that he could well have influenced him to take a generally dim view of America without furnishing specific sources for Baudelaire's views (for quotations from De Maistre, see Robert G. Mahieu, Les enquêteurs français aux Etats-Unis de 1830 à 1837 Paris: Champion, 1934⁷, p. 31). Anti-Americanism in Stendhal was rather strong and appears in a number of places in his work. The last sentence of the first chapter of Le rouge et le noir offers a particularly striking parallel with one of Baudelaire's complaints against America: "La tyrannie de l'opinion, et quelle opinion! est aussi bête dans les petites villes de France qu'aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique" (Le rouge et le noir Paris: Garnier, 1950⁷, p. 6; see also the footnote to this passage). The study by Mahieu, just cited above, furnishes numerous parallels for Baudelaire's view of America in such writers as Lamennais (p. 53), Saint-Victor (pp. 72, 129), Chevalier (pp. 83, 133-5, 137), Beaumont (pp. 115, 122-3), Toqueville (p. 87), and Cortambert (p. 141).

2. These and all succeeding references to Baudelaire's works are based on the Jacques Crépet edition of Les œuvres complètes de Charles Baudelaire (Paris: Conard-Lambert, 1922-1953; 19 vols.). The individual volumes will be indicated, in parentheses just after each quotation or paraphrase, by the following abbreviations: AR = L'art romantique, HE = Histoires extraordinaires, NHE = Nouvelles histoires extraordinaires, CG = Correspondance générale, and OP = Oeuvres posthumes. All italics within the quotations are Baudelaire's.
3. The three critics Baudelaire is referring to are apparently P. Pendleton Cooke, Lowell, and N. P. Willis (OP, I, 569; HE, pp. 396-7).
4. Baudelaire's invasion of Belgium was probably inspired, at least in part, by the hope of accomplishing in that country what Poe, Dickens, and others had done in America by means of the public lecture. His own venture was a dreadful failure, one of the final turns of the screw.
5. Although Baudelaire's Catholicism was of a highly dubious variety, he never felt anything but distaste for Protestantism.

His few allusions to it are all unfavorable, taxing it either with commercialism (AR, p. 124) or with excessive moral and aesthetic austerity (AR, pp. 139, 155; Fusées, XII, 16-18; Curiosités esthétiques, p. 275). Only one reference (OP, I, 239-40) seems to associate Protestantism with religious heterodoxy.

6. Baudelaire is here echoing several complaints voiced by Poe about the neglect or mistreatment of Southern writers by the critics and public of the North and especially by "that magnanimous cabal which has so long controlled the destinies of American Letters, in conducting the thing called 'The North American Review'" ("The Poetic Principle," The Works of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. John H. Ingram, London: J.A. and C. Black, 1910, III, 210). The principal source of Baudelaire's remark is no doubt the following passage from Poe's review of Lowell's A Fable for Critics: "Mr. Lowell is one of the most rabid of the Abolition fanatics; and no Southerner who does not wish to be insulted, and at the same time revolted, by a bigotry the most obstinately blind and deaf, should ever touch a volume by this author. . . . His prejudices on the topic of slavery break out everywhere in his present book. Mr. L. has not the common honesty to speak well, even in a literary sense, of any man who is not a ranting abolitionist. With the exception of Mr. Poe (who has written some commendatory criticisms on his poems) no Southerner is mentioned at all in this Fable. It is a fashion among Mr. Lowell's set to affect a belief that there is no such thing as Southern Literature. Northerners--people who have really nothing to speak of as men of letters--are cited by the dozen, and lauded by this candid critic without stint, while Legaré, Simms, Longstreet, and others of equal note, are passed by in contemptuous silence. Mr. L. cannot carry his frail honesty of opinion even so far South as New York. All whom he praises are Bostonians. Other writers are barbarians, and satirized accordingly--if mentioned at all" (The Works of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. cit., IV, 307-8). In the same vein are Poe's remarks on Beverley Tucker (III, 461).
7. This passage accords well with the political theories which Baudelaire derived from De Maistre and which strengthened their hold on his thought as his pessimism and misanthropy deepened in the latter years of his life. The underlying principle is perhaps most explicitly stated in a maxim which Baudelaire said came to him in a dream: "Alors je réfléchis que la bêtise et la sottise modernes ont leur utilité mystérieuse et que souvent ce qui a été fait pour le mal, par une mécanique spirituelle, tourne pour le bien" (CG, I, 375). See also "Fusées," VIII, 28-30, and "Mon cœur mis à nu," V, 17-19; VII, 15-16.

8. According to Crépet (OP, III, 381), Baudelaire is not referring to the letter which Booth wrote to his mother on the day of Lincoln's assassination (April 14, 1865), but to a confession dated April 25 (the day before Booth was killed), which Baudelaire could have found in a volume entitled Confession de John Wilkes Booth (Paris, 1865).
9. That is, Dr. Mudd, who tended Booth's leg after the assassination and so incurred a long prison term.
10. From the expression of sympathy for the slaves in the passage on American hypocrisy, we would gather that Baudelaire's pro-Southern feeling did not lead him to espouse the Southern arguments on slavery. We must not forget his long liaison with Jeanne Duval, "la Vénus noire," and the movements of admiration and pity which she and other "filles de couleur" inspired in him. Besides the poems (in prose as well as in verse) addressed directly to Jeanne, note the touching sketch of "la négresse, amaigrie et phthisique" in "Le cygne" (Les fleurs du mal) and the very similar picture of a dark-skinned girl in "A une Malabaraïse" (Ibid.), the same one, perhaps, who inspired the charming prose-poem "La belle Dorothée" and its verse counterpart "Bien loin d'ici."
11. In his 1856 article on Poe, Baudelaire, following Griswold, gave Poe's birth-place as Baltimore (HE, p. xii) but, quite naturally, spoke of Virginia as Poe's "pays" and of Richmond as "les lieux que son enfance lui avait rendus chers" (HE, p. xvi). In the 1857 article, he called Poe "le Virginien" and "l'homme du Sud" (NHE, p. viii). It is quite understandable that Baudelaire should not have known that Poe had proclaimed himself a Bostonian on the very title-page of Tamerlane and Other Poems (1827), but it is almost incredible that he entirely missed the implication of the words "we Bostonians" in "The Poetic Principle" (The Works of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. cit., III, 202), a work which Baudelaire knew thoroughly and admired profoundly and, in fact, completely assimilated (but he did not translate it--perhaps to avoid the charge of plagiarism). Of course, Poe's own lies and mystifications, repeated by Griswold, are the ultimate source of most of Baudelaire's factual errors. But how account for the birth-date of 1813 which he gives in the 1856 article (HE, p. xii)? Furthermore, Baudelaire not only gives the wrong date (as does Griswold), but smugly appeals over the head of Griswold to the authority of Poe himself on this point. Examining the biographical data to which we can be sure Baudelaire had access, I can find only one possible source for the 1813 date--Lowell's article (in Graham's Magazine, February, 1845), in which appears the statement that "Mr. Poe is still

in the prime of life, being about thirty-two years of age. . ." (The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. James A. Harrison New York: Crowell, 1902, I, 382). Not only is this statement rather vague, but it is Lowell speaking and not Poe. Finally, by what mysterious arithmetic could a person born in 1813 be thirty-seven years old in October, 1849, as Baudelaire twice said Poe was OP, I, 264; HE, p. xvii? when he died?

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GONE WITH THE WIND in Germany: Translation and Criticism (to 1940)

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Margaret Mitchell's sprawling and exciting novel, Gone with the Wind, appeared in Germany in translation at a time when native Unterhaltungsliteratur was neglected, and more serious writing in the liberal tradition discouraged, in favor of the strident literary products of "Blood and Soil." Already phenomenally successful in America and England--it was estimated that if all copies sold within the year following its publication could be piled one upon another, "the stack would be 250 times taller than the Empire State Building"¹--Gone with the Wind in German translation also gained a prompt and unprecedented popularity with readers and the critical approval of most reviewers.

Vom Winde verweht was first published by the Goverts Verlag of Hamburg in September, 1937, a little more than a year after the appearance of the original in America. The response of German readers was immediate. Within a few days 12,000 copies had been sold, and in December Goverts was advertising its book as "the great success." In less than a year sales had reached the 100,000 mark. A sixteenth edition was printed in 1941, the last before the end of the war. After the outbreak of hostilities with the United States late in 1941, further sale of the book was prohibited. By this time the publishers had disposed of 276,000 copies, while the Deutsche Buchgemeinschaft had sold a special edition of about 90,000 copies.²

That more than 365,000 copies of Gone with the Wind in German were sold within a period of four years illustrates the spectacular natural appeal of the book in continental Europe,³ and also reflects the excellence of the translation itself, which was made by Martin Beheim-Schwarzbach. The son of a Würzburg doctor and world-traveler, Beheim-Schwarzbach was born in London in 1900 and grew up in Hamburg. Before the second World War he emigrated to his native city and after its conclusion returned again to Hamburg. Also a biographer, essayist, and poet, the translator of Gone with the Wind is best known for such novels as Die Michaelskinder (1930), Die Herren der Erde (1931), Der Gläubiger (1934), and Die Verstossene, which was published by Goverts the year after Vom Winde verweht.

A comparison of the German version of Gone with the Wind with the original⁴ confirms the opinion of German critics that the translation was "masterful," "outstanding," and "vivid," and establishes its maker--along with Hans Schiebelhuth (Wolfe) and Hermann Stresau (Faulkner's Absalom,

Absalom!)--as one of the foremost translators from the American of the period.

Beheim-Schwarzbach's is not at all a slavish, word-by-word translation. Phrases, clauses, and sentences are frequently rearranged. Omissions, ranging from single words to whole sentences, are quite frequent. Occasionally sentences are telescoped or paraphrased rather than translated. While the omissions sometimes may appear arbitrary, in general the translator has speeded up the pace of this massive novel, and in places improved upon its often rather pedestrian style.⁵

Furthermore, Beheim-Schwarzbach showed remarkable grasp of southern expressions and of Americana. Local allusions were understood almost without exception, and often given a translation that would explain their meaning to non-American readers. Thus "possum hounds" became "Jagdhunde," "their poor Cracker neighbors" "die mittellosen weissen Kleinfarmer und Trapper aus der Nachbarschaft," "a fe'el han'" "eine Pflückerin vom Feld," and "hoecakes" "Maiskuchen."

Confronted with the almost insoluble problem of reproducing the colorful, illiterate talk of Mammy, Peter, and the other negroes, Beheim-Schwarzbach sometimes, but not always, used unorthodox word order and incorrect inflectional endings. Thus Jeems exclaims: "Wie ich dazu kommen, bei Herrschaften spionieren. ... Nein, ich gewiss nichts gehört, was sie wütend machen." His "das ich auch nie verstehen," stands--rather weakly, I think,--for the rich "ah ain' never figgered dat out mahseff." Frequently, indeed, the negro speech comes out quite close to standard German, and not too different from that of Scarlett, Ashley, and the other aristocrats, a defect to which one contemporary German reviewer called attention.

Yet on the whole Beheim-Schwarzbach's translation of Gone with the Wind is extraordinarily skillful, both in the rendering of individual phrases as well as in its overall effect. There appear to be practically no mistranslations, which is truly remarkable in view of the predominantly local flavor of the novel and its enormous length--"only twenty-five pages less than the Sears Roebuck catalogue" (Rosenbaum).

The wide variety and representative nature of the German periodicals and metropolitan dailies that reviewed Vom Winde verweht--often at considerable length--on its appearance in 1937 and in the following year bear eloquent witness to the extent of its fame. Reviews appeared in such prominent journals as Deutsche Zukunft, Europäische

Revue, Der Bücherwurm, and Das innere Reich. The novel was commented upon by such widely different organs as the Nazi Die Bücherei and Die neue Literatur, the moderate Die Hilfe, the Protestant Die christliche Welt, and the pedagogical journals, Anglia (Beiblatt) and Neuphilologische Monatsschrift. Briefer notes appeared in Die Literatur, Das deutsche Wort, Deutsche Rundschau, and the Catholic Hochland. Four influential newspapers, Berliner Tageblatt, Deutsche allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurter Zeitung, and Kölnische Zeitung, carried extensive reviews.⁶

Among the Germans commenting on the novel were editors of periodicals or newspapers: Wolfgang von Einsiedel, Rudolf Pechel, Bruno Werner; the Anglist Friedrich Brie; literary critics and reviewers: Hanns Effenberger, Lothar Erdmann, Adolf Heckel, Otto Karsten; and writers: C. W. F. Behl, Curt Hohoff, Will Vesper, and Wolfgang Weyrauch. While, to be sure, there are few well-known names in this group, most showed an interest in contemporary American literature in other reviews and articles. Since Gone with the Wind in some ways falls under the rubric Frauenroman, it is not remarkable that a number of women critics, for instance Irene Seligo, also wrote reviews of the book.⁷

In general aware of the phenomenal popularity of Margaret Mitchell's novel in its native land and of its obvious appeal to European readers, German reviewers--as the following discussion will point out--examined the book and attempted to account for its success on the basis of its compelling narrative, its presentation of a fascinating era of American history from the southern and a sympathetic point of view, and its excellence of characterization and psychological insight. The pertinence of the novel to modern Germany was likewise stressed, and also an effort made to establish its position in relationship to other contemporary American writing.

Most German reviewers praised the uncommon narrative talent they discovered in the composition of this lengthy novel, although some few censured either the book's occasional lapse into melodrama or its unpoetic style. Professor Brie, commenting enthusiastically and at length in 1936 on the original, wrote that it was "a work of art" that held its readers' attention every moment despite its great size, and also was as exciting as a melodramatic novel. Another scholar found this "epic" masterful in its treatment of an extraordinarily exciting action, while still another noted the same epic quality in it that characterized Thomas Wolfe.⁸ One newspaper reviewer called the narrative talent shown in the novel "a natural phenomenon," and another praised the epic power and colorfulness resulting

from the natural flow of the author's narrative gift. According to Rudolf Pechel Margaret Mitchell was "a born storyteller."

The enthusiasm of German reviewers, to be sure, was somewhat tempered by their realization of the shortcomings of Miss Mitchell's naive if compelling manner of presentation. One of them, for instance, in a generally favorable review, complained that the plot of Gone with the Wind was contrived almost to the point of cheapness, and the story narrated "with an unworried spontaneity that did not shy away from banality or even triviality," and the charge of cheap and sensational writing (Kolportage) was also made by at least two other critics. Fault was also found with the accumulation of crises which resulted in one scene's "killing" another, with the discordant mixture of epic and melodrama, and with the endless treatment of minute details which gave the book its "somewhat awkward size."

Like some Americans,⁹ a few Germans called attention also to the obvious linguistic weakness of Gone with the Wind. While one reviewer praised the "communicative, truly narrative," if non-poetic language of the novel, another found the language of the book quite inartistic and conventional, "even unpoetic," and entirely secondary to the aggressive telling of the story. The abundance and flow of the subject matter, he contended, which "put any concern with style in the background, overflowed the banks of harmonious expression."

Turning from the narrative power and obvious charm of the novel to its subject matter, German reviewers expressed an almost unlimited fascination for Miss Mitchell's picture of the South in its ante-bellum glory, its heroic struggle in the Civil War, and its sad days of defeat and reconstruction. Here are a few typical comments: "The writer conjured up the picture of a fine, vanished and destroyed world," "the splendor and magic of the strictly traditional world of the Georgia farmer," the war with the "Yankees, superior in money and technology," that "mowed down human life, traditions, possessions, and the old customs." "The portrayal of the easygoing, patriarchal conditions before the Civil War, their dissolution, and the post-war confusion constitutes the real significance of the novel." Margaret Mitchell showed "the whole atmosphere of the Civil War and the following 'Reconstruction' so plastically," that the German reader was reminded of the horrors of the World War. Weyrauch found that the author "succeeded in depicting with absolute correctness, as if she had been there, the clangor of war, the economic causes of the conflict, the feelings and actions of men during the war and after defeat." Only

Vesper, editor-in-chief of the Nazi Die neue Literatur, took exception to "this cleverly pasted-together, bright and bloody painting of American history."

Some German reviewers noted that the Civil War was seen from the viewpoint of the southern states, and most seemed to be sympathetic to Miss Mitchell's obvious bias, although one reviewer admitted that the author's total disregard of all the arguments against tyrannical plantation owners and slave holders known from Lincoln's speeches and from Uncle Tom's Cabin "might seem revolutionary" to German readers. Conditioned by long-standing aversion to Amerikanismus, Germans were readily disposed to favor the gracious, patriarchal society of the South over the cool, calculating business spirit of the Yankees, a spirit they were accustomed to consider typical of America.

The rural and regionalist emphasis of Gone with the Wind led in one instance, at least, to a misinterpretation of the book as the embodiment of "a Weltanschauung related to National Socialism." It was claimed that two basic elements of Nazi philosophy were to be found in the novel: struggle in which only those with brains and courage would succeed, and love for homeland and soil--"Blut und Boden".¹⁰

German reviewers were in general agreement in admiring the fusion of historical background and the personal story of Scarlett O'Hara and the other colorful figures of Miss Mitchell's Old South. "Not the least of the charms of this historical novel," wrote a critic, "was that it was never felt as history, for history appeared only as it was experienced by the characters." Thus the Germans also examined Gone with the Wind as a psychological novel and generally found in it an unusually competent gift of characterization. One newspaper reviewer considered the power and sureness with which Miss Mitchell showed the development of her characters "astonishing," and the texture of the psychological background "woven with majestic breadth and richness," while another reviewer saw in "the plastic portrayal and sharp differentiation" of the inhabitants of the exotic southern country "probably the most convincing proof of the great and genuine talent" of the author. According to others, Miss Mitchell was "masterful in the creation of people," showed uncanny psychological intuition that might be called "inspired," and was a "master of psychological subtleties."

The praise of Gone with the Wind as a psychological novel was of course based chiefly on the reviewers' enthusiastic admiration of Miss Mitchell's fascinating and demoniac (dämonisch) heroine, Scarlett. Probably it was her strength and vitality that attracted most reviewers,

but some were concerned with explaining or defending the admitted amorality of her conduct. The following grandiloquent comment is not untypical of the German attitude towards Scarlett:

The "little person" has in the end become a grand, representative, indeed symbolic personality, who after a long and bitter road beyond good and evil finally is revealed....[as] the spirit and power of preservation and reconstruction....as the living and unswervingly active embodiment of the indestructibility of the powerless South in general and the source and mother of a new, future development.¹¹

Weyrauch's review of Gone with the Wind in Deutsche Zukunft was entitled "Novel of an Egoist," a view not left unchallenged by readers of that journal, who found excuses for Scarlett's unscrupulous and selfish conduct in the early death of her mother or in her saving Melanie at the risk of her own life. Conceding that Scarlett could not at all be called "good," another reviewer contended that she grew in stature to become "a piece of imperishable, earthy, and not ignoble humanity."

A few adverse remarks, to be sure, were made about Scarlett's adequacy as a character in a novel. One critic questioned whether she was psychologically rich and charming enough to keep the reader's attention for so many pages, while another found her offering herself to Rhett to save Tara unconvincing. And with characteristic intemperance Vesper denounced Scarlett as a "half-sweet American Lulu" and "repulsive literary construct."¹²

Under the spell of Scarlett, German reviewers had less--and less favorable--things to say about the other figures of the novel. To one critic many of the secondary characters seemed crudely drawn or unfinished, while to another the men were a little too external, although both Scarlett's father and "that wonderful pirate, blockade-runner....cynic and idealist, Captain Butler" were praised. Brie, to be sure, criticized the character of the latter for its "admixture of romantic sentimentality which women like to ascribe to roguish cynics," while another reviewer perspicaciously observed that Butler was too much aware, like Nietzsche, of his superiority to be convincing, and too much the pupil of Freud to have lived then.

Belonging to a nation that had been defeated twenty years before, German reviewers and readers saw in Miss Mitchell's moving portrayal of the lost cause of the South and a "beaten but beautiful foe" (Rosenbaum) a close parallel

to their own situation. One critic, for instance, contended that the novel concerned Europe too, for he felt that it could hardly have been written without the example of the World War and its consequences for the victor and the vanquished, while another reviewer was reminded of the horrors and dangers during and after the war, the real reason, he felt, Germans were so moved by the book. This especial fascination for the Germans--which did not exist at least for Americans from the North--was summarized in a letter commenting on Weyrauch's review, in which the writer noted that in reading the novel the women of Germany would recall "how they themselves had hoped, starved, and suffered." It seems likely that the novel's great popularity in Germany today--Gone with the Wind was reported in 1954 among the volumes in the American Memorial Library in Berlin most in demand¹³--is also in part a result of an even closer parallel to World War II and the occupation.

Although, as we have seen, German comment on Gone with the Wind was generally enthusiastic, few reviewers would claim that it was "literature" in the sense of books by Wolfe, Faulkner, Hemingway, or Wilder. To be sure, Professor Brie maintained that the book was "the highest achievement in the American novel since Dreiser's American Tragedy," and compared several aspects of it to O'Neill's dramas, a comparison certainly reflecting more his interest in the American playwright than any natural similarity. While occasionally a critic might mention Wolfe or Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom! in connection with Gone with the Wind, it was usually--and correctly--grouped with the other American historical novels that were achieving popularity in German translation in the later thirties.

One reviewer, for instance, found that Gone with the Wind and Stribling's The Store complemented each other most happily, while another commentator on the American literary tradition included Miss Mitchell with Stribling, Roberts, and Elizabeth Madox Roberts (of Kentucky) among the recent writers of the United States who were rediscovering their past. Summarizing the direction of contemporary fiction in America in 1937, W. E. Süskind, editor-in-chief of Die Literatur, noted a turn from "unpleasant experimental books" to the long historical novels of Allen, Roberts, and Mitchell, and the Entwicklungsromane of Santayana and Masters.

German reviewers, aware that the unprecedented popularity of Gone with the Wind in the English-speaking world might arouse suspicions in Germany about its literary merits, insisted that its success was well-earned, artistically thoroughly justified, and might well be lasting. Available in the unusually fine translation of Beheim-Schwarzbach it

had also in Germany a huge sale between its appearance in September 1937 and the beginning of the war with the United States late in 1941. As an historical novel without direct reference to the contemporary scene, it could be safely read and criticized even under the strict control of intellectual life imposed by the National Socialists. Its compelling story and narrative technique, its stirring picture from the southern point of view of a predominantly rural and traditional culture more sympathetic to Europeans than the "Amerikanismus" of the North, and its telling psychological study of the development of a forceful and colorful heroine--these were the factors explaining why the Germans of the later 1930's shared the general enthusiasm for the world's most popular novel.¹⁴

1. Belle Rosenbaum, Scribner's, August 1937, p. 23.
2. Letter to me from Claassen Verlag (formerly Claassen and Goverts), Hamburg, August 20, 1954. Malcolm Cowley, Literary History of the United States, ed. Spiller, et al., rev. ed. (New York, 1953), p. 1382, puts the total sale of the German translation to 1941 at the exact figure of 360,693 copies.
3. Translations also appeared in Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Hungary, Norway, Poland, and Sweden. G. W. and D. B. Brown, A Guide to Soviet Russian Translations of American Literature (New York, 1954), list none (up to 1947) for the Soviet Union.
4. I have examined carefully about 100 pages of the original and translation: Chs. i, ii, vi, viii, xlviii, lxiii.
5. For instance, by decreasing the frequency of the annoying mannerism "she thought."
6. According to letter from Claassen Verlag there was "practically no important German newspaper or magazine" that did not review the book.
7. The following discussion is based chiefly on comments appearing in the periodicals and newspapers listed above made by these and other critics.
8. The comparison with Wolfe was high praise in Germany; see my article, GR, XXIII (April 1948), 131-148.
9. See, for instance, Time, July 6, 1936, p. 62: "....The

novel is written in a methodical style which fastidious readers may find wearing"; Books, October 25, 1936, p. 26: "The writing is redundant and devoid of distinction; Miss Mitchell is apt to make two words grow where even one would be superfluous."

10. Armin Frölich, Neuphilologische Monatsschrift, X (1939), 43-48.
11. Otto Karsten, Kölnische Zeitung, November 20, 1937, p. 3.
12. Vesper wondered how she and Rhett could be the dream figures of the German people, and added the threat "and what part of our people."
13. Newsweek, October 18, 1954, p. 95.
14. In Spiller, et al, Literary History of the United States, p. 1267, Gone with the Wind is called "both at home and abroad....the greatest publishing success of the century."

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Language and Society in Merovingian Gaul

By Louis Furman Sas, College of the City of New York

Traditional linguistic scholarship has pictured the Merovingian period as a savage, barbaric period in which the long-haired Germans played havoc with Gaul, a period in which invasion followed invasion until the Gallo-Roman majority adopted some of the vocabulary of the German minority. Such words as the French guerre, pronunciations such as guastare from Latin vastare (Fr. gater), and the pre-feudal social system are traced as German in influence. As Louis Halphen in Les Barbares puts it:

Dès la première moitié du VIIe siècle, l'évêque d'Arles Césaire coudoyait en Provence de gros négociants qui ne savaient ni lire ni écrire; il s'en étonnait encore. Cent cinquante ans plus tard, la lecture et l'écriture passait en Gaule pour un luxe que bien des clercs, certains évêques même ne pouvaient se permettre.¹

According to this view it was this ignorance and the breakdown of the entire educational system that caused the learned men of the time, both churchmen and laymen, to write in a barbarous Latin an incorrect form of Classic Latin, which they did not want to use. The common Gallo-Romans and Franks spoke a Vulgar Latin which had been used for centuries and was now completely deformed. It is out of this oral language--of which we have no written records--that the Romance Languages were formed. The view of Professor Henri François Muller and his school is opposed to this conception of things. The Muller view equates Merovingian with Vulgar Latin and makes much of the new psychic forces in Catholicism in the explanation of the phenomena called proto-Romance.

The Merovingian period is a period of wars, of invasions, of plunder and of general barbarism. When Clovis succeeded to the chieftainship of the Merovingian Franks in 481 he became the leader of a vigorous, self-confident group that felt itself to be "the wave of the future." This came about because the Gallo-Romans had lost faith in the destiny of Rome, and the poor and the serfs did not wish to die for a society that was not theirs. The Gallo-Romans of the lower classes, some of them of Germanic origin, and therefore a kind of fifth column, were what Toynbee has labelled "the internal proletariat." As Christians they felt themselves to be members of a society apart, a group that did not integrate into the Roman machine. Many of the small peasants went over to the Germans in large numbers because they enjoyed more favorable conditions under their rule.

Although Professor Muller has overstated the effects of Christianity upon syncope and holds this religious movement responsible for the change from the quantitative to the accentual rhythm, it cannot be denied that early Christianity was a democratic movement. Professor Dopsch, the eminent authority on the society of the time, puts it as follows: "Among the lower classes of the population in particular, Christianity appeared as a religion of the weary and the heavy laden. Originally, it had, to some extent at least, a socialistic, if not a communistic character."² The long persecution of its adherents drove them into the closest association. As inferiors in the social setup they were attracted to a creed that abolished social rank and made the soul of the slave and the king equal and equally immortal. The dignity of each individual was therefore raised and his self-confidence increased.

As the difficulties increased the Church with its growing wealth was able to perform services that no other group could perform. It meted out charity, took care of the poor, provided sanctuary for all, helped slaves obtain better treatment or ransom, took care of foundlings and provided credit. It was able to make good its preaching by practice to an extent hitherto unknown to Gaul.

Socio-linguistic interrelations can be gauged more clearly by vocabulary. If we compare the wine, women, and song vocabulary of the nineteenth century with the whiskey, cocktails, jazz and bee-bop of the twentieth, we see the altered pattern of sentimental relations and the influence of the United States. In the technological vocabulary this influence is even more evident and too obvious to be dwelt upon.

If we look at the vocabulary innovations of the Merovingian age, we note the following in the texts themselves:

botelli, bowels, also sausages; ab oculis, blind; gives Fr. aveugle; gracilis, which means "thin"; (Fr. grèle); also macer, "thin," and crassus, "fat"; bassus, low; it still meant "thick" in Isidore of Seville, but it comes to mean "low" in St. Gall (8th cent.); sationes; seasons (Fr. saisons); sagma, sauma (O.Fr. some), animal; in rugitu, in heat (Fr. en rut); cloccas, bells (Fr. cloches); mansio, the principal word of the period; (Fr. maison, ménil, mas, manoir); demorare, (Fr. demeurer); scindulas, shingles; toaclum, towel (Sp. toalla, Fr. toaille); baccones, bacon; bratsare, to stir (Fr. brasser, also brasserie); fladone, custard; source of famous French flan; se vel lavare vel calceare, (Fr. se laver et se

chausser; se collocent, (Fr. se couchent); barcaniare, to haggle. (Fr. barguigner); arrinare, (Fr. arriver); colligere, (Fr. cueillir, for flowers); Nullus se inebriet, let no one get drunk (reflexive of Fr. s'enivrer); pacare, with meaning of "pay"; famem habeo, (Fr. j'ai faim), habeo annos bene cento, j'ai presque cent ans; media die, midi; precaria, legal word at first, now prière.³

This list could be multiplied many times, but I have given a few examples from each category. New relations have brought a new vocabulary. The significant thing to be noted is that the supposedly oral creations, which used to be constructed theoretically and starred by Meyer-Lübke and others, are found in the texts. Are these numerous words reflections of the oral language or are they representative of the lowest level of Merovingian Latin? It seems to me that they bear the same relationship to higher forms of the written Latin that spoken French with its absence of past definites and its creations like quand j'ai eu vu (for j'ai vu) bears to literary French. It is to be noted that the popular level of spoken French is now found represented very widely in our democratic era.

However, the naked absolutism of the Merovingian kings had the bishops between it and the people. The Merovingian age can be called the age of the bishops. They are the persons who act. They organize, preach, move from place to place, and settle questions of state even more than ecclesiastical matters in numerous councils. At first more numerous in Africa--there were 900 bishops in Africa in 411 A.D. to only 36 in Gaul at the same date--the bishops slowly created a superior clerical organization that gave them an incalculable power in the events of that age.

The conversion of the lower levels of the population was carried on in an oral language by people who entered the Church without too much education. The sermons they delivered were written in a Christian Latin which showed numerous oral characteristics. The textbooks of the age, The Lives of the Saints, were also written in this popular Merovingian Latin, and a Christian education which excluded all forms of pagan literature was carried on on a low level by half-educated teachers.

An important consideration in the relationship between the language and the society of the time is the attitude of the churchmen toward language in general, an attitude I have called "the linguistic ideal."⁴ I can best illustrate the importance of the linguistic ideal by citing Professor Cornu's recent work on the double-compound tenses in French.⁵

He tested pupils of the twelve to thirteen year level and found that the majority of the pupils used the expression Quand j'ai eu fini mon devoir. At the sixteen to seventeen year level not one would use the above construction in writing. The influence of the school had done the work. However, since the oral use of the double compound is common, Professor Cornu wishes the grammars to include it. His linguistic ideal, not being that of the purist, admits as correct what is common in the oral language.

Something like this must have taken place in our period. By the sixth century a conscious attempt was made to abandon the grammar of a Donatus and to make a virtue of a necessity. The linguistic ideal was that truth was better than grammar and the merits of the saints more stirring than the artifices of style. Merovingian Latin--even if it was not correct by Classic Latin standards--was comprehensible to the common people. St. Caesarius of Arles wrote as follows:

If I wanted to make you understand the...Scriptures in the order and language of the holy fathers, the food of the doctrine would only go to a few wise men and the multitude would go hungry. That is why I humbly ask that the ears of the learned consent to tolerate rustic speech so that the entire flock of the Lord may receive the celestial nourishment in a simple and unified language, and since the ignorant cannot rise to the height of the learned, let the latter deign to come down to the level of their brothers; because the learned can understand what has been said for the simple folk and the simple folk cannot understand what has been said for the learned.

In more learned Arles this watering-down of purist standards for the sake of comprehensibility may have been deliberate; in Northern Gaul the watering-down was the only way the educated knew of communicating with the people. In Merovingian authors I noted more than 92 passages of linguistic comment bearing on the above question. A common sentiment was "Atque ideo iste sermo intergritatis religione contentus rennuit mundanam pompa, quia resputit cum suis operibus gloriae mundanae iactantiam et potius eloquio piscatorum concordare quam rethorum." The well-known preface of Gregory of Tours in which Gregory's mother tells him that because he was a man of plain culture and speech he was the kind of writer who would be understood by the people was used to justify the simple Merovingian Latin of Gregory's Lives of the Saints.

The new linguistic ideal of usage seems to have become the language of the people and the changed morphology with

its emerging oblique case for nouns and proto-Romance patterns as well as the changed phonology and syntax of this Latin proves that this intention was carried out.

The latest study on the Merovingian period, the Politzers' Romance Trends in 7th and 8th Century Latin Documents,⁶ confirms the fact that the Latin documents of this period have key linguistic phenomena (both phonetic and morphological) that are between the Classical and the Romance forms. The data do not confirm the lack of dialectalization and therefore contradict the Muller theory of the uniformity of the Latin of Romania. Stress accent increases in the original documents of 750-770 A.D., but only in Northern France and Northern Italy. Syncopation, fall of final vowels, effacement of intervocalic plosives all take place in the seventh century and are reflected in the statistical charts of the Politzers. Whether the cause of the stress is German influence, as Von Wartburg has pointed out, or the religious individualistic psyche, as Muller has maintained, the interesting thing again is the fact that the texts represent a vulgar level of Merovingian speech. My own feeling is that H. F. Muller has made too great a use of psychology. The explanation is chiefly sociological and the language reflects the democratic nature of the society and the new social relations of a semi-feudal Christian environment in which purists and educators can no longer find an audience and in which the mass of the population has penetrated the higher echelons of intellectual life. As in our own society, in which novelists spring from the people and use the language and idiom of daily life, the Merovingian period and its literature reflect the birth of a new language. This new language, which was given status by written expression, could no longer be turned backward to the past by the Carolingian renaissance and a few centuries later bloomed into the varieties of Latin called Old French, Old Spanish and Old Italian.

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1. Louis Halphen, Les Barbares (Paris, 1940), p. 270.
 2. Alfons Dopsch, The Economic and Social Foundations of European Civilization (London, 1937), p. 247.
 3. See H.F. Muller, L'époque mérovingienne (New York, 1945) chap. 15.
 4. L. F. Sas, "Changing Linguistic Attitudes in the Merovingian Period," in Word, Aug. 1949, pp. 131-135.

5. Maurice Cornu, Les formes surcomposées en français (Bern, 1953).
6. Frieda N. Politzer and Robert L. Politzer, Romance Trends in 7th and 8th Century Latin Documents, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1953.

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Getting Acquainted With Alfonso Hernández-Catá

By Pedro N. Trakas, Davidson College

Getting acquainted with Alfonso Hernández-Catá, one of Latin America's greatest short story writers, has been a fascinating experience. It began when a State Department Grant made possible six months of research in Havana, Cuba.

Meeting Hernández-Catá's widow and family resulted in the gathering of a wealth of information which could not have been found assembled elsewhere. The family had four huge albums in which were pasted hundreds of articles from the newspapers and literary journals of many countries. Some of the articles were written by the author himself, but most of them were critical evaluations of the author and his works by the critics of his day. Daily access to these albums, therefore, proved to be invaluable, not to mention the additional wealth of personal information gladly given by the family, and the opportunity to examine the author's own library.

As is often the case in Latin America, the larger libraries of Havana were inadequate for extensive research. Fortunately, through the assistance of Dr. Fermín Peraza, Cuba's outstanding bibliographer, several private libraries were made available. Without this help, the collections of El Fígaro, Social, and La Esfera would have been inaccessible, and proper research would have been greatly hampered, because Hernández-Catá contributed prolifically to these literary journals.

It was through Dr. Peraza that the opportunity of examining the author's expediente at the Cuban Department of State was made possible. This privilege is not supposed to be granted. He also arranged meetings with the leading literary figures of Cuba. Most of these writers, such as Jorge Mañach, Juan J. Remos, José María Chacón y Calvo, Félix Lizaso, Enrique Serpa, Fernando Campoamor, Rafael Estenger, and Lino Novás Calvo, had known Hernández-Catá intimately, and each was able to give information that could not be found in writing.

Of all the Cuban writers who knew Hernández-Catá, the one who was closest to him was Dr. Antonio Barreras. Among other things, he had many photographs and letters which revealed extremely personal episodes in the author's life. Dr. Barreras was the originator of the two "Hernández-Catá Prizes" that are given annually for the two best short stories submitted. It was also he who started the annual pilgrimage to the tomb of the deceased author on November 8, the anniversary of Hernández-Catá's death. Dr. Barreras has recently begun the publication of a series called Memorias de Alfonso Hernández-Catá which, when completed, should be a lasting and worthy monument to the masterful cuentista.

Alfonso Hernández-Catá was born on June 24, 1885, in Aldeadavila de la Ribera in the province of Salamanca, Spain. This is contrary to most references, including those made by Cuba's most competent literary historians, which give his birthplace as Santiago de Cuba. Nevertheless, there are sources that give positive proof in this matter, the most reliable of which are his records in the Cuban Department of State. This information was first made public in an article by the Spanish author, Enrique González-Fiol, for the journal La Esfera.¹ This article quotes Hernández-Catá as giving Aldeadavila de la Ribera as his true birthplace. José Balseiro does likewise in his essay on Hernández-Catá in La Novela Iberoamericana.²

The circumstances of Hernández-Catá's birth in Spain are unusual. Although his mother was a Cuban, his father was a Spanish lieutenant-colonel and wanted his first child to be born in Spain. While Hernández-Catá's mother was pregnant, therefore, her husband took her from Cuba to his native village in Spain. When Hernández-Catá was born, the village doctors were not competent, and complications set in. The result was that one of his mother's legs had to be amputated. This upset the father so much that he wanted to return to Santiago as soon as possible. Three months after his birth, Hernández-Catá was in Cuba.

The father died when Hernández-Catá was only eight years old. When Alfonso reached the age of sixteen, his mother felt that he was in need of strict discipline and sent him to the Colegio de Huérfanos Militares in Toledo. It was while he was at this school that he first tried his hand at writing, in the form of "cuartillas." The confinement of the Colegio, however, did not suit his temperament, and after only a short time there he ran away to Madrid.

Hernández-Catá stayed in Madrid until 1905. During this time he accepted any job that had anything to do with literary work. The first fifty pesetas he earned were for a French translation, in which he says there was more invention than translation. Another meager source of income was from speeches he wrote for other people to deliver. On one occasion he and a friend, Luis de Oteyza, persuaded a third person to join them in founding a literary magazine. The venture was a complete failure. The most interesting story of these early years in Madrid, however, is the one concerning the trick he had to play to become a collaborator for the well-known literary journal Blanco y Negro. When Hernández-Catá had what he considered his first good short story, he managed to get Benito Pérez Galdós to read it and tell him what he thought of it. He saw that Pérez Galdós was favorably impressed, and asked him if he would say so in a note to Torcuato Luca de Tena,

editor of Blanco y Negro. Pérez Galdós was willing, and Hernández-Catá was soon handing the note to the stern editor. Luca de Tena promised to read the story, and each time Hernández-Catá returned, he got the same answer. Seeing that this would get him nowhere, Hernández-Catá decided upon another approach. Luca de Tena soon began receiving regular notes from Pérez Galdós, insisting that Hernández-Catá's story be published. Finally, to satisfy the famous novelist, Luca de Tena published the story without discovering that Hernández-Catá had learned to copy Pérez Galdós' handwriting and had written the notes of insistence himself. This was Hernández-Catá's first important step toward literary fame.

In 1905 Hernández-Catá returned to Cuba, where he became an editorial writer for the newspaper La Discusión. While he was working at this position he had to write everything from editorials to sports articles. He held this place until 1907, when he returned to Madrid to marry Mercedes Galt Insúa, sister of the Spanish novelist, Alberto Insúa. Then he returned to Cuba with his bride and became a Cuban citizen.

In 1907 Hernández-Catá published his first book, Cuentos pasionales,³ which received the praise of many worthwhile critics. In 1909 Hernández-Catá entered the diplomatic service of his country. Between 1909 and 1933 he served as Consul in Le Havre, Birmingham, Alicante, Cádiz, Madrid, Lisbon, Copenhagen, and Seville. In 1933 he was kept, by force, from delivering a lecture against the Cuban dictator, Machado. Knowing that he would be dismissed from the diplomatic service, he resigned. After the ousting of Machado from power, the Department of State re-admitted Hernández-Catá into the service and appointed him Ambassador to Spain. Due to the complaints and malicious accusations of his Cuban enemies in Madrid, he resigned his position as Ambassador on January 25, 1934. Between 1935 and 1940 he served as Minister to Panama, Santiago de Chile, and Río de Janeiro. On November 8, 1940, came the shock of the tragic news of the airplane accident in which he was killed. He was on his way from Río to São Paulo to deliver a lecture. He is survived by his widow, three sons, and two daughters.

It would be difficult to understand the life and works of Hernández-Catá without knowing first that throughout his lifetime there was controversy as to whether he should be considered a Cuban or a Spanish author. It cannot be denied that most of his life was spent away from Cuba. This can be attributed to the fact that his diplomatic assignments seldom allowed him to return home. Consequently, many of his fellow-countrymen refused to consider him a Cuban. But should a man be considered a foreigner if his work demands that he live away from his country? The answer involves Hernández-Catá's

motive for wanting to be a foreign diplomat. Even his closest friends admit that he entered the diplomatic service mainly for two reasons: First, to get the travel and experience which he considered vital for his writing; second, to be able to live in a literary atmosphere where he could get his works published. Hernández-Catá was, above all, a writer, living primarily for his art.

Hernández-Catá's multiple personality explains the great variety of his literary efforts. To begin with, he was a man of vehement passions who believed that a man has no right to say that he has lived if he has not suffered. Consequently, his heart went out to any and every sufferer because he himself knew many types of suffering. The thing that afflicted him most, however, was that hesitation on the part of his adopted country in claiming him whole-heartedly, especially when his love for Cuba was so great. If this were not true, he would not have re-written his masterful Mitología de Martí¹⁴ so many times or threatened to destroy the final manuscript because he was not sure that it was good enough for his country. It was his most outstanding dedication to Cuba, and he wanted it to be perfect.

In spite of the fact that most of his works emphasize pain and death, Hernández-Catá was a jovial man by nature. He had the mind of a sage but the heart of a child. He showed a great fondness for music, flowers, and bright neckties. At the same time, Hernández-Catá was a good man and impressed everyone with his kindness. He was just as kind to humble servants as he was to people of position and influence. There was nothing he would not do for a true friend. His friends, in turn, felt the same way about him. For example, when he was accused of plagiarism in 1926, an article of protest was published by his literary colleagues, proving that the accuser was wrong and demanding an apology. The apology was obtained.

Hernández-Catá's own opinion of his character was that will power was his strongest characteristic trait. He was very sure of himself and almost always achieved his goals. He considered himself a worker without method but with a great capacity for work. He was a voluminous reader, a keen observer, and possessed a prodigious memory. In spite of his outstanding accomplishments, however, he never let success go to his head. Until the day he died, he was seeking new horizons.

The works of Hernández-Catá are adequate proof that his name deserves a prominent position in the annals of both Cuban and Spanish literature. This has been verified by the best literary critics and by the fact that many of his works have been translated into several languages. José Balseiro,

for example, considers him important enough to devote to him one of the three essays which comprise the second volume of his excellent book, El Vigía.⁵ The other two are on Unamuno and Pérez de Ayala. Benito Pérez Galdós had this to say about the Cuban author: "Hernández-Catá puede y debe dar cualquier día a las letras hispanas, una obra maestra."⁶ Emilia Pardo Bazán says that "El testigo"⁷ deserves a place among the best of Spanish short stories.⁸ Jacinto Benavente makes this comment about one of Hernández-Catá's books: "La voluntad de Dios"⁹ es uno de los libros de estos últimos tiempos que se leen con más pasión y que más dejan en el alma. Bastaría él sólo, y tiene varios gemelos, para consagrar a su autor."¹⁰ Enrique Díez-Canedo, the famous Spanish critic, much impressed with Hernández-Catá's book, Los siete pecados,¹¹ offered the following praise: "Su libro merece atención. Muchas veces, por debajo de la anécdota impresionante, se siente el latido de una pasión, en que se traduce a lenguaje de eternidad lo efímero de los gestos humanos."¹² Eduardo Gómez de Baquero, another noteworthy Spanish critic, made these remarks about the author's work: "Hernández-Catá no hace libros de prosa y al modo industrial tan en boga. Tiene el don de la emoción, que es uno de los privilegios espirituales del verdadero artista, y tiene el mérito de la novedad."¹³ The Cuban critic, Alberto Lamar Schweyer, shows his opinion of Hernández-Catá by what he says about one of the author's books:

El bebedor de lágrimas¹⁴ es una de las pocas obras que firmadas por un cubano pueden ir a luchar por la supremacía literaria de América. Frente a Díaz Rodríguez en Venezuela, a Quiroga y Viana en Uruguay, a Gálvez en Argentina, a Barrios en Chile, a Lobato en Brasil, ¿qué novelista que no sea Hernández-Catá podemos presentar?¹⁵

About Mitología de Martí the well-known Cuban author and critic, Jorge Mañach, makes the following remarks:

Cuando se hayan hecho todas las reservas a que la sinceridad y la misma admiración obligan, la Mitología de Martí se nos impone como una hermosa realización. Hermosa por su fervor, por su misma audacia condensadora, por su armoniosa órbita y su lujo de interpretación y de caracterización. Sobre Martí se han escrito cosas más exactas. Pocas que hayan calado tanto en la entraña del hombre y del patriota. Ninguna más bella.¹⁶

A final appraisal from the pen of another Cuban author is brief but still one of the best. Without hesitation, Enrique José Varona says: "Hernández-Catá es el más completo cultivador de las letras en la juventud cubana."¹⁷

If one can judge by the critical comments presented, not to mention countless others that are just as praiseworthy, it seems that there is no doubt that the name of Hernández-Catá deserves a prominent place in literature. Although his work as a whole reveals superior artistry, it is in the field of the short story that he reaches his loftiest heights. There is no cuentista in Spanish American literature, other than Horacio Quiroga, who equals him.

Since Hernández-Catá's literary formation took place in Spain, his style is predominantly Spanish. Nevertheless, it definitely contains a strong Cuban flavor. On the other hand, his heart was unquestionably Cuban. In an attempt to be universal, he avoids for the most part setting the action of his works in fixed places, but some of his tales are laid in Cuba. Moreover, a strong atmosphere of the sea is clearly visible in some of his best efforts, and this can easily be traced back to the island of his youth. We can conclude, therefore, that he belongs to both Spain and Cuba.

Hernández-Catá is not without acclaim in Cuba. There is one honor, however, which the eminent Austrian biographer, Stephan Zweig, said Cuba should bestow upon him. Zweig maintained that Hernández-Catá's work was of such universal merit and consequently brought such honor to his country that the Cuban government should publish a national edition of his complete works in order to perpetuate his memory as one of the great men of Cuban letters.

Hernández-Catá's style is classic in a sense. In form he is precise, ever seeking the exact word for the exact situation, and his aim is universality. That he possesses an unusually rich vocabulary cannot be disputed. Although he may occasionally be accused of wordiness in his longer works, his short narrations are masterpieces of condensation. His power of psychological penetration and his ability to synthesize human emotions can hardly be surpassed. Excellent examples of this are "Los muertos," "La madrastra," and "El destino," which are among his best short stories. He definitely has an eye for unusual situations, and his preference for odd characters is obvious. Consequently it is easy to account for much of the irony that is found in his works and to understand why his chief protagonist is usually Pain or Death. If his work contains a flaw, it is almost complete lack of humor. Since humor is such a universal expression, the author's attempt to achieve universality is somewhat hampered by this omission.

Hernández-Catá displayed his mastery of style in many fields, including the novel, drama, poetry, essays, sketches, literary criticism, and even journalism. His preference for

the short story stemmed from the fact that he felt that it was the literary form which was the most appropriate for the rapid pace of modern life, and his main effort was to synthesize an entire life within a few pages. Consequently, his short stories never contain a word too much or a word too little. And, master of language that he was, his choice of words is exquisite. There is no preponderance of dialogue or of description. Everything is kept in perfect balance at all times.

Both Spanish and Spanish-American anthologies have recognized Hernández-Catá and have included some of his works. Nevertheless, he deserves more recognition than he has yet received. The day should come when no collection of the great short stories of the world will appear without the inclusion of one or more of Hernández-Catá's masterful stories.

1. Enrique González-Fiol. "Domadores del éxito: Alfonso Hernández-Catá," La Esfera, Madrid, July 28, 1923, año X, no. 499.
2. José Balseiro. "Revisión de Hernández-Catá," La Novela Iberoamericana, (ed. A. Torres-Ríosco), Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1952, pp. 105-122.
3. Cuentos pasionales. Madrid, M. Pérez Villavicencio, 1907, 125 pp.
4. Mitología de Martí. Madrid, Renacimiento, 1929, 442 pp.
5. José Balseiro. El Vigía. Madrid, Editorial Mundo Latino, Madrid, 1928, 403 pp.
6. Benito Pérez Galdós. "Algunas opiniones españolas sobre la obra de A. Hernández-Catá," Sus mejores cuentos (edited by Nascimento), Santiago de Chile, Editorial Nascimento, 1936.
7. Alfonso Hernández-Catá. "El testigo," Sus mejores cuentos, Santiago de Chile, Editorial Nascimento, 1936, pp. 19-31.
8. Emilia Pardo Bazán. "Un poco de crítica de cuentistas," A.B.C., Madrid, November 23, 1919.
9. Alfonso Hernández-Catá, La voluntad de Dios. Madrid, Editorial Alejandro Pueyo, 1921, 319 pp.

10. Jacinto Benavente. "Algunas opiniones españolas sobre la obra de A. Hernández-Catá," Sus mejores cuentos, (edited by Nascimento), Santiago de Chile, Editorial Nascimento, 1936.
11. Alfonso Hernández-Catá, Los siete pecados, Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 1919, 235 pp.
12. Enrique Diez-Canedo. "A. Hernández-Catá: Los siete pecados," El Sol, Madrid, November 23, 1919.
13. Eduardo Gómez de Baquero. "Algunas opiniones españolas sobre la obra de A. Hernández-Catá," Sus mejores cuentos, (edited by Nascimento), Santiago de Chile, Editorial Nascimento, 1936.
14. Alfonso Hernández-Catá, El bebedor de lágrimas. Madrid, Editorial Mundo Latino, 1926, 319 pp.
15. Alberto Lamar Schweyer. "Hernández-Catá y el sentido trágico de la vida," El País, Havana, June 8, 1927.
16. Jorge Mañach. "Mitología de Martí," Revista de la Habana, I, no. 2, February, 1930.
17. Enrique José Varona, "Algunas opiniones americanas sobre la obra de A. Hernández-Catá," Sus mejores cuentos, (edited by Nascimento), Santiago de Chile, Editorial Nascimento, 1936.

Some Significant Recent Books in the Field
of German Literature*

Gerhart Baumann. Franz Grillparzer. Sein Werk und das österreichische Wesen. Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 1954. Pp. 241. DM 15.80.

Grillparzer's humanitarianism, loyalty, and introspection as characteristic elements of the Austrian personality, are brought out effectively in this study, and at the same time his qualities as a dramatist are also analyzed in detail. Baumann properly emphasizes that Grillparzer knew and understood the exigencies of the stage and wrote superbly theatrical drama as well as noteworthy philosophical plays.

Herbert William Belmore. Rilke's Craftsmanship. Oxford, Blackwell, 1954. Pp. 234. 25 s.

This detailed analysis of Rilke's language is a useful auxiliary apparatus for future critical studies on Rilke. Belmore familiarizes us thoroughly with all of the grammatical and stylistic devices most frequently used by Rilke. The concluding chapter is a particularly valuable study of some aspects of Rilke's influence.

Der Briefwechsel Arthur Schnitzler - Otto Brahm.
Edited by Oskar Seidlin. Berlin, Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte, 1953. Pp. 266.

This remarkable correspondence sheds a great deal of valuable light on the history of the German theater around the turn of the century. In addition to the two principals in this correspondence we also find much useful material on Hofmannsthal, Alfred Kerr, Paul Schlentner, Max Reinhardt, and other personalities of equal stature.

Hans Eichner. Thomas Mann, eine Einführung in sein Werk. Bern, Francke, 1953. Pp. 124. Fr. 4.80.

Eichner's introduction to Thomas Mann's work succeeds in presenting the great novelist as a typical personality of the twentieth century. Eichner unravels many complex

*In each subsequent issue of the Kentucky Foreign Language Quarterly significant books received for review will be listed with short annotations. The classical, mediaeval, Romance, and Germanic fields will be covered in rotation.

strains in Mann's life and work; and while the book offers little that is startling or new, it is a thoroughly adequate introduction.

Barker Fairley. Goethe's Faust. Six Essays. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953. Pp. 132. \$2.00.

Fairley's studies of Faust lead him to the conclusion that Goethe's genius is basically lyrical and that Faust must be viewed in this light. He argues convincingly that Faust is a sort of Ur-drama to demonstrate the relations of man and God.

Jonas Fränkel. Dichtung und Wissenschaft. Heidelberg, Lambert Schneider, 1954. Pp. 263.

Fränkel's unmerciful castigation of shallowness and low academic standards in the first essay of this collection "Von der Aufgabe und Sünden der Philologie" may be a bit exaggerated in places for the sake of effect, but it serves a wholesome purpose. Other essays in this volume reveal a sharp and perceptive critical mind with a message that younger critics may ignore only at their own peril.

Martin Greiner. Zwischen Biedermeier und Bourgeoisie. Ein Kapitel deutscher Literaturgeschichte. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1953. Pp. 339. DM 12.80.

This study of German literature from 1830 to 1848 is a useful survey of a sometimes confusing period. Greiner properly concludes that Heine alone brings together all the trends of the age and represents it most effectively; as a result, an unusually large portion of the book is devoted to Heine.

Werner Günter. Jeremias Gotthelf: Wesen und Werk. Berlin, Schmidt, 1954. Pp. 327. DM 23.60.

In the current Gotthelf revival attendant upon the Birkhäuser edition (1948-1953; 20 vols.) Günter's work is especially useful for his review of earlier studies on the novelist. Although Günter shows much insight into Gotthelf's background and the formal aspects of his work, this book is marred by occasional excesses of enthusiasm on "der ewige Gotthelf."

Johannes Klein. Geschichte der deutschen Novelle von Goethe bis zur Gegenwart. Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner, 1954. Pp. 527. DM 36.--.

This important study by a Marburg professor includes some twenty chapters, covering over 500 pages and accompanied by a thirteen page bibliography. Klein has had a difficult job to select the more important authors of Novellen, and, while one might differ with him with regard to his canons of inclusion, his work is a significant contribution to the critical literature on German prose fiction.

S. Liptzin. The English Legend of Heinrich Heine. New York, Bloch Publishers, 1954. Pp. 191. \$3.00.

Heine's reputation in England is both a curious and a rewarding subject. Heine himself never understood England properly, and some Englishmen (notably Carlyle) have been strongly prejudiced against him. On the other hand, Englishmen such as Matthew Arnold have done as much or more to interpret Heine properly as have German critics. Liptzin's study traces these movements carefully and is a valuable contribution to Anglo-German literary relations.

Percy Matenko. Ludwig Tieck and America. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1954. Pp. 120. \$3.50.

Like Zeydel's Ludwig Tieck and England this work examines in detail the reputation of Tieck in America. Matenko not only studies references to Tieck in American magazines and in the works of American authors, but he also reports the impressions of Tieck's American visitors and even lists the Americana in the auction catalog of Tieck's private library. Matenko has made an important contribution to the history of German-American literary relations.

Walter Muschg. Jeremias Gotthelf; eine Einführung in seine Werke. Bern, Francke, 1954. Pp. 219. Fr. 2.90.

This collection of essays consists principally of Muschg's introduction to the Birkhäuser-Klassiker edition of Gotthelf. Each essay is an objective analysis of one of Gotthelf's novels or a collection of his stories. It should be recalled that Muschg is the author of the now almost classic Jeremias Gotthelf: Die Geheimnisse eines Erzählers (1931).

Wolfgang Pfeifer-Belli. Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung. Freiburg, Herder, 1954. Pp. 648. DM 28.50.

Copiously illustrated and provided with a carefully selected bibliography, this new history of German literature is valuable for its presentation of the Catholic viewpoint. It covers the entire field of German literature, from the earliest reference in Tacitus to the bards up to the present day.

Walter Silz. Realism and Reality: Studies in the German Novelle of Poetic Realism. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1954. Pp. 168. \$4.50.

This valuable contribution to the study of the Novelle contains a general essay on the Novelle and poetic realism and critical analyses of nine Novellen, ranging from Brentano to Gerhard Hauptmann. Silz' study of this genre offers a wealth of new ideas and critical standards, presented in a lucid, highly readable style.

E. L. Stahl. Friedrich Schiller's Drama. Theory and Practice. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1954. Pp. 172. 18s.

Brevity, clarity, and objectivity are the hallmarks of this significant study by the Germanist of Christ Church, Oxford. Stahl treats Schiller's theory and practice together, and in this way he is able to bring home effectively the basic points of Schiller's esthetics. The author has obviously been through the vast literature of his subject, but he has succumbed to no prejudices that are so characteristic of much Schiller criticism.

J. P. Stern. Ernst Jünger, a Writer of Our Time. Cambridge, Bowes and Bowes, 1953. Pp. 63.

Although this is a polemical pamphlet attacking Jünger, it is a valuable contribution because of its penetrating and lucid analysis of Jünger's style. Stern makes a strong case for Jünger's "literary impotence," but the strictures in this pamphlet will not be universally accepted.

Margarete Susman. Gestalten und Kreise. Zürich, Diana Verlag, 1954. 365p.

This new collection of essays by an eighty-year-old critic contains valuable studies on Goethe, Strindberg,

Nietzsche, Stefan George, Dostoevski, Moses Mendelssohn, Franz Rosenzweig, Gurewitsch, Henri Bergson, and Sigmund Freud. The essays on the great German Jewish writers and philosophers are especially enlightening, for few can know better than Margarete Susman what pre-Hitler Germany meant to the Jew.

H. M. Waidson. Jeremias Gotthelf. Oxford, Blackwell, 1953. 231 p. 25s.

This study properly identifies Gotthelf as a regional rustic romancer. Waidson analyzes Gotthelf's use of peasant types and milieus in detail and reveals the Swiss writer as the true father of the Dorfgeschichte, to an even greater degree than Auerbach. Waidson is completely objective and temperate in his judgments.

E. O. Wooley. Theodor Storm's World in Pictures. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1954. Pp. 95. \$7.50.

The three hundred numbered pictures give an effective background for serious study of Storm's work and, as Professor Wooley indicates in his preface, will "facilitate more accurate research on Storm." Wooley has sought out all the people and places associated with Storm and brought them together in a single photographic archive. Undergraduate students of German will also derive much pleasure and benefit from studying this volume.

H. Uyttersprot. Heinrich Heine en zijn invloed in de Nederlandse letterkunde. Oudenaarde, Sanderus, 1953. Pp. 528.

The first half of the book is a general critical study of Heine, while the second half deals specifically with Heine's influence in the Netherlands. Uyttersprot has undertaken an enormous and detailed job in assaying the German poet's position in the Netherlands, noting criticism, translations, and imitations (of which there were an abundance). Heine was less popular in Belgium during the last century, but even there he has come into his own in the twentieth century.

Books Received

Boor, Helmut de, and Newald, Richard. Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Vol. II: Die hofische Literatur: Vorbereitung, Blüte, Ausklang, 1170-1250. Munich, Beck, 1954. Pp. 435.

Green, F. C. Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Study of his Life and Writings. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1955. Pp. 376. \$5.00.

Haeringen, C. B. van. Netherlandic Language Research. Leyden, Brill, 1954. Pp. 108.

Henkel, Arthur. Entsagung: eine Studie zu Goethes Altersroman. Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1954. Pp. 171. (Hermaea, Germanistische Forschungen, N.F., Bd. III.)

Kindermann, Heinz. Wegweiser durch die moderne Literatur in Österreich. Innsbruck, Österreichische Verlagsanstalt, 1954. Pp. 128.

Opitz, Martin, Buch von der deutschen Poeterei. Hrsg. von Wilhelm Braune. Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1954. Pp. 54. (Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke, 1.)

Rychner, Jean. La Chanson de Geste, essai sur l'art épique des jongleurs. Société de Publications Romanes et Françaises. Geneve, Librairie E. Droz; Lille, Librairie Giard, 1955. Pp. 174.

Turgenev, I. S. Fathers and Sons (stressed edition), edited by E. R. Sands. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1955. XV, 208 pp. \$1.75.

Wilkinson, L. P. Ovid Recalled. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1955. xvii, 484 pp. \$6.50.

KENTUCKY FOREIGN LANGUAGE QUARTERLY

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A section entitled "Books Received" with short, non-critical annotations, will appear at intervals. For the present, no book reviews will be published. Publishers are invited to send new books for annotation. A note indicating price and publication date should be included.

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